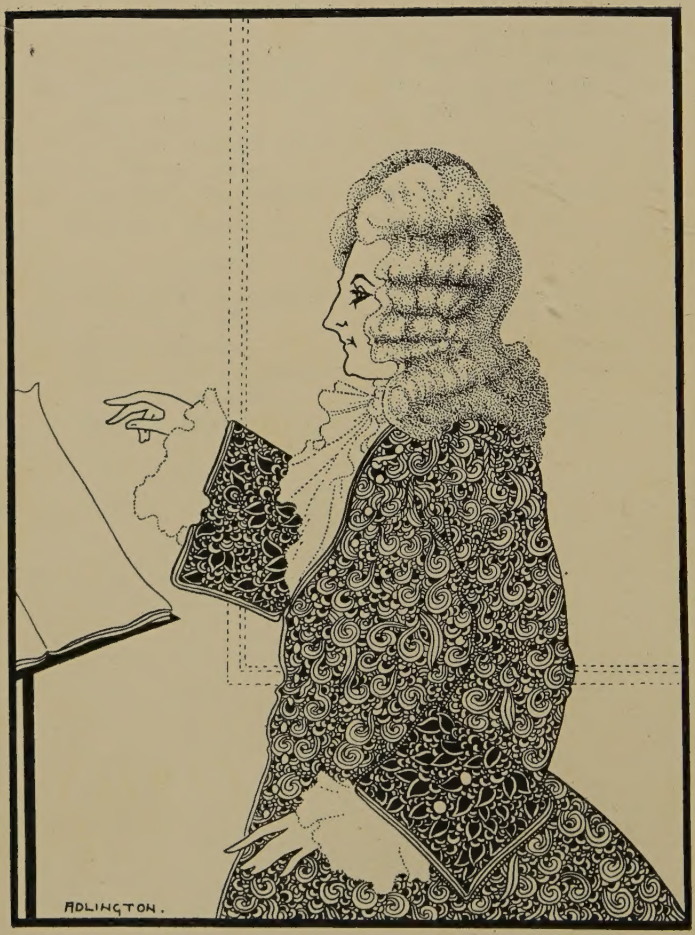
Prize awarded to
Miss Stella Donnelly
for obtaining 2nd Class
Honours in Grade IV.

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL

Uniform with this Volume

HENRY PURCELL	*By* DR. W. H. CUMMINGS
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH	*By* REGINALD LANE POOLE
GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL	*By* MRS. JULIAN MARSHALL
JOSEPH HAYDN	*By* MISS TOWNSEND
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART	*By* DR. F. GEHRING
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN	*By* H. A. RUDALL
CARL MARIA VON WEBER	*By* SIR JULIUS BENEDICT
GIOACHINO ROSSINI	*By* H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS
FRANZ SCHUBERT	*By* H. F. FROST
FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY	*By* W. S. ROCKSTRO
ROBERT SCHUMANN	*By* J. A. FULLER MAITLAND
RICHARD WAGNER	*By* DR. FRANCIS HUEFFER
MARIA LUIGI CARLO ZENOBI SALVATORE CHERUBINI	*By* FREDERICK J. CROWEST
JOHANNES BRAHMS	*By* E. MARKHAM LEE



G. F. Handel

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL

1685 - 1759

BY

MRS. JULIAN MARSHALL

FOREWORD BY

FRANCESCO BERGER

HON. R.A.M., F.G.S.M.

(1914)

LONDON

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO., LTD.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY PURNELL AND SONS
PAULTON, SOMERSET, ENGLAND

PUBLISHERS' ANNOUNCEMENT

TAKE the light away from the skies, take the flowers off our earth, take the waves from the sea, and take Music out of our lives, and what is left ? A darkened world, a barren earth, a waste of stagnant water, saddened days and joyless nights.

Music, in one form or another,—whether learned or simple, vocal or instrumental, dramatic or lyrical, appeals to our entire race, and those who have spent their years in producing it for us, have contributed abundantly to the sum of human happiness. Acknowledging our indebtedness to them, it is but natural that we should wish to know something about the when, where, and how, of their activities.

This information the present series of biographies of Music's mighty Masters, supplies, in briefly-told volumes, full of reliable facts, with very little exaggeration or partisanship, and compiled by authors of highest standing, each with special qualification for his task.

The volumes are issued at the uniform price of 2*s.* 6*d.*, and are obtainable from any bookseller in the Kingdom and Colonies.

The general editorship has been entrusted to Mr. Francesco Berger, Hon. R.A.M., F.G.S.M., whose extended experience has been of valuable service to us and whose ready help we gratefully acknowledge.

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO., LTD.

HANDEL

The following lines are extracted from the Preface which the compiler of this biography had affixed to an earlier edition:

"Handel's travels, and his public life as an opera and oratorio director and *impresario*, at a time when Italian opera, new to this country, was a source of public excitement, caused his career to be so interwoven with the political, social and literary life of the first half of the eighteenth century, that a great deal of extraneous matter must be touched on to render the story coherent.

"The Handel who has been idolised by the English is the Handel of 1738–59, and the history of at least fifteen of these years is told in his oratorios. These nineteen great Works are the outcome of Handel's past life, and to sum up the characteristic merits of each would require an intimate knowledge and an amount of self-confidence not aspired to by the writer.

"Up to 1735 the present work is based chiefly on Dr. Chrysander's *G. F. Handel*, which, unfortunately, stops short before the period where interest culminates. To the ordinary reader the difficulty must be considerable of extracting facts from their nebulous surroundings. The writer is also indebted to Mr. Schœlcher's enthusiastic *Life of Handel* for valuable historical and chronological help."

Here my quotations end.

Among our mighty musicians there are but few, if any, whose lives teem with romance to such an extent as that of Handel. In using the word "romance" I do not mean the romance of love-affairs, such as we encounter in the biographies of Chopin or Stradella, but the romance of business, of enterprise, of successes and failures, of triumphs

and disappointments. For, when all that is fictitious in his history has been removed, the myths and mysteries that surround his career been eliminated, so much remains that is lovable in the man and noble in the artist, that we still think of him as an unreal and romantic creature, in spite of his accredited visits to Fleet Street dining-rooms, and his splutterings of broken English.

Those few unaccountable persons who, after close upon two centuries of worship at his shrine by millions of every nationality, not confined to the vulgar herd but including musicians and critics of the highest distinction—profess to discover flaws in his work, dishonest appropriation of other men's brains, and subservience to the fashion of his day, may be reminded that, with the solitary exception of Wagner, there has not been any other Composer whose works have furnished the entire *menu* of a three days' festival, as his have done at the Crystal Palace. And that these huge gatherings have not been found less attractive to subsequent audiences than when first instituted under Costa in 1857.

They may also find it difficult to account for the fact, that thousands of good citizens and moral men and women, who but seldom seek religious consolation in church or chapel, flock to their one annual *Messiah* performance at Albert Hall or Westminster Abbey, looking upon their pilgrimage not as an entertainment but as an act of devotional service.

That Handel's christianity was of a very practical nature, is shown by his well-known interest in The Foundling Hospital, as well as in his establishing and richly benefitting The Royal Society of Musicians, a benevolent institution for relieving the widows and orphans of musicians.

The annual banquet of the last-named charitable organisation is a function which, in common with many professional colleagues, I but rarely fail to attend. I recall an occasion when Charles Dickens was the chairman of the evening. In proposing the continued prosperity of the

nstitution, and inviting subscriptions to its funds, he alluded to its founder, Handel, as "that great musician with no other handle to his name." It was a true, though somewhat trite, remark, and Dickens's own career proves the truth of the adage that it is not the title that distinguishes the genius, but the genius of the few that ennobles the title of many.

F. B.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

NTRODUCTORY 1

CHAPTER II.

HILDHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH 10

CHAPTER III.

AMBURG 20

CHAPTER IV.

TALY 32

CHAPTER V.

IRST ESTABLISHMENT IN ENGLAND 47

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC 66

CHAPTER VII.

HANDEL MANAGER OF THE ITALIAN OPERA . . . 82

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE
THE ORATORIOS 104

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION 123

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL

HANDEL.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

No century has been more remarkable for musical activity than the seventeenth. None can boast a longer roll of eminent, of illustrious names; and yet for its first eighty-five years it was not marked by the appearance of one of those intellectual giants in whose work is resumed the music of an age. With the exception of the Englishman, Purcell, these eighty-five years produced no single composer of supreme original genius, though they abounded in gifted musicians, inventive, accomplished, industrious men, who, each in turn, bequeathed treasures to art and left music further advanced than they found it—steps in the ladder by which a few have climbed to immortality. Those few live in their works and are with us to-day; the names of the others will not, indeed, be forgotten, but they belong to history.

In Italy, the Garden of Eden of music, the seventeenth century was an age of revolution. The purely vocal, polyphonic form of the art had attained its ideal perfection in Palestrina, and had vanished with him. Simultaneous with its passing was the proclamation of

its successor. The days of Paradise were over. Musicians tasted the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, and the divine impersonalities of Palestrina were lost to them, while the need for individual expression suddenly asserted itself, first finding its voice in men who had something to say, but, being unskilled in the conventional modes of speech, were driven to invent a language for themselves. In the attempt to revive the declamation of Greek tragedy, the foundations were laid of the modern opera and oratorio, the essential feature of both, in their earliest forms, being monologue or dialogue set to musical notes and declaimed by individual singers, sustained by just so much instrumental accompaniment as was necessary to support the voice, and enhanced by stage accessories, scenery, dresses, action, and dances.

Crude as were the first specimens of this new art, it was based on a truth, and took firm hold on popular affection. It was akin to the Italian nature, to its passion, its eloquence, its dramatic instinct and its universal gift of song. It spread like wildfire. With their keen instinct for beauty and genius for form, the Italian composers enlarged and embellished the lines of opera, the simple recitative being gradually varied by the aria, the arioso, the duet, and the concerted finale, while the orchestra, though always subordinate, acquired more harmonic importance and more character of its own. Arising out of the necessities of this lyric drama, the art of singing, strenuously cultivated, attained a high degree of perfection, insomuch that there came a time when composers, inspired by their singers rather than their subject, were led to write music of which the chief quality was its vocality, and which served rather as a medium of display for the singer than of expression for the composer. True, there arose some men who, while not rejecting the leading idea of their age, yet strove to interweave it with

something of the grand spirit of a past time. Of these, Leo is, perhaps, the noblest example. But the structural weakness in the choral writing of his successors, and the mundane, semi-sentimental character of their compositions for the church, show the complete state of decadence in the art of pure vocal counterpoint. It declined rapidly, while the dramatic and personal element steadily advanced, in the forms of opera, oratorio, and cantata, from the early attempts of Peri, Caccini, and Emilio del Cavaliere, to Monteverde; thence to Cavalli, Cesti, Legrenzi, and Lotti; the great Carissimi, and Colonna; Rossi, Stradella, and Alessandro Scarlatti, in whom and (at the beginning of the eighteenth century) in Pergolesi, the early Italian opera attained its highest dignity. No revolution was ever more rapid or more complete. Between the last opera of Monteverde and the first of Alessandro Scarlatti there were only forty years.

If Italy has been called the Eden of the art, Germany may perhaps be compared to its Promised Land, and the wanderings and struggles of the chosen people during this century were to be gloriously crowned and rewarded in the next. The early German musicians of the seventeenth century studied their art in Italy, with eminent Italian masters, returning to their native land proficients in counterpoint, which they applied, not to the weaving of delicate vocal texture from the thread of the *canto fermo*, but to the elaboration of the church chorale in its organ accompaniment. Their chief constructive skill being thus turned in an instrumental direction, they were led, even in choral compositions, to treat voices as instruments, and to make a bolder use of harmony, involving a freer system of part-writing than was the case with their Italian models.

The new Italian music soon found its way to German courts, but the mass of the German people, strongly tinctured with Protestantism and a certain homely

piety, equally far removed from the dramatic and the ecclesiastic, was for a long time very little affected by it. The typical musician of Germany was the organist, and such men as Reincke at Hamburg, Kuhnau at Leipzig, Johann Pachelbel at Nürnberg, Buxtehude at Lübeck, and the long line of Bachs in Thuringia, were the musical leaven of the nation. But, although the German composers never discarded the combinations of science in favour of simple declamation or melody, they could not fail to be influenced by the new spirit.

The first German oratorios were Mystery or Passion-plays, setting forth in detail the history of the Passion of Christ, then, as since, the chosen theme of German writers of sacred music. The narrative was set throughout to recitative-music, interspersed with chorales, and performed without action or scenery, after the manner of a solemn service rather than of a theatrical spectacle. Of these "passions," *Die Auferstehung Christi*, by Heinrich Schütz, produced at Dresden in 1623, is the oldest extant example.

Schütz is the father not only of German oratorio but also of German opera, his setting of a translation of Rinuccini's *Dafne* having been performed on the occasion of a royal wedding at Torgau in 1657. But the first German opera ever represented in public was by Johann Theile, and was produced at Hamburg in 1678. It had for its subject the story of Adam and Eve, and can have differed but little in its character from the early specimens of Italian oratorio. It had numerous successors by the same and other composers, but all were suddenly consigned to antiquity on the appearance of one man who, by his genius at once receptive and inventive, did for Germany what a series of men had done for Italy, and, passing over intermediate steps, lifted German opera from its primitive condition and placed it on a level with that of more

advanced countries. This was Reinhard Keiser, whose first opera, *Basilius*, appeared only fifteen years after Theile's *Adam und Eva*. The spirit of the time was thoroughly congenial to him, and he seized on it at its happiest moment. An accomplished, not a learned musician, his great success was due to a spontaneity which no learning can bestow, to the felicity with which, especially in recitative, he found for the words their just and natural expression in music, and to the instinct for rhythm and dramatic fitness which in his work made every stroke tell. Nothing was elaborated in his operas; they are not remarkable for unity of design, nor are his later works an advance on his earlier in this or any other respect. But fluency, vivacity, and melodious grace, were gifts rare among German composers. With inexhaustible fertility, or rather facility, he composed in forty years more than 120 operas, all so popular that the Hamburg Opera-house for which they were written became famous, not only in Germany but throughout Europe.

In France the opera, although first introduced by Cavalli in 1660, owed its real existence to Lulli, by birth and temperament an Italian, though by education and sympathies so French that it was difficult for any native composer to obtain a hearing after him. The style of declamation he introduced was based on the character and genius of the French language, to such a degree that although most of it is musically obsolete, its principles remain in force at the present day. He was a master of every kind and combination of rhythm, and turned these to good account in the piquant measures of French ballet music. In imparting musical form, symmetry, and variety to poetic recitation, the work he did in France was analogous to that done in Germany by Keiser; but his influence was more widely spread and more enduring than Keiser's, partly owing to the sway

exercised by French fashion over other countries, and partly because he had, in Quinault, a poet who supplied him with good dramas, and with verses better worth setting to music than those of the German librettists. His fame, too, preceded Keiser's by a quarter of a century, and the latter was indebted to him, as well as to the Italians, for the first impulse given to his genius, whereas Lulli was little, if at all, indebted to any one, and stands alone. Fertile, though not prolific, he was laborious and skilful in construction, and rendered lasting service to Europe by his systematized extension of the instrumental prelude, which in his hands became the early classic type of the modern overture.

In England, the seventeenth century was one of culmination. Less dependent then than now on the music of other countries, she had for a time a school of her own. Founded, as other schools were founded, on the work of Italians and Netherlanders, its first representatives were the English madrigalians, who, of all writers, stand in closest affinity with the great polyphonists of Italy. The last of these was Orlando Gibbons, who died in 1624. Silenced for a while during the Revolution and the Commonwealth, music found her voice again at the Restoration in Henry Lawes, Pelham Humfrey, Lock, and many more; but, though these musicians were expert contrapuntists, the melodic wave had reached our shores, and polyphony had disappeared. At this juncture arose Henry Purcell, the one star of first magnitude that musical England can claim as her own. In his short life of thirty-seven years (1657—1694) he produced masterpieces in every style, giving to each and all of them a stamp of his own, unmistakable and inimitable. Only four of his works were published during his lifetime; he was unknown out of his own country, and even in it, although he was famous, his career was arrested too soon for his great-

ness to be fully realized or for his influence to be felt at the time. This intuitive genius was in some respects so far in advance of his age that, to estimate him rightly, his countrymen have needed an education at the hands of eighteenth and nineteenth century composers, who have led us up by degrees to some of his abrupt discoveries. It is only necessary to read Burney's patronizing strictures on his chromatic harmonies to see how incapable of appreciating him were even educated musicians, though his sincere admirers, and that a century after his death.

His most important innovation corresponds with that effected by Lulli, Keiser, and Scarlatti, in their respective countries. But these great men helped or perfected a work already begun, and which in Italy indeed was far advanced. In England, the nearest approach to opera was the masque, or play with incidental music, and Purcell was the first Englishman who attempted an opera in which the words were sung throughout. His musical declamation was as sympathetic to the English language as Lulli's to the French, while in wealth and beauty of original ideas he was infinitely Lulli's superior, giving to his recitative a force and a fire, dramatic and musical, which in their way have never been surpassed, and can never grow old. The best specimens are as fresh now as when they were written.

Had Purcell lived longer, English Art might have had a different history. But he appeared like a brilliant meteor, and vanished, leaving darkness all the darker. There was no one to succeed him, capable of carrying on the work he had begun. Nothing was left to England but a staff of earnest, respectable, not creative musicians, and an insatiable thirst for music, from any quarter, at any price.

Thus, in Italy science was despised or neglected in favour of flowing melody and individual expression, so

that the composer became too often the mere instrument of the executant. In Germany music was being worked out as a problem. France held apart, and England was at a standstill. The end of the seventeenth century was to give the world two great men who fulfilled the promise of all this time; master-spirits who gave coherence to the stirring mass, and reconciled the music of the heart with that of the head; who expressed in their works the essence of all past music, and laid the foundation of all music in the future. In 1685, within a month of each other and within a few miles of each other, were born John Sebastian Bach and George Frederic Handel.

Bach lived, laboured, and died in his native land. Handel, a German, devoted the best years of his life to naturalizing Italian opera in England, and failed. Out of this failure arose a new form of art, the English oratorio. By this splendid creation he has immortalized himself in all the world, but especially in the heart of the English people, for he has done more to spread the love and the practice of music in the country of his adoption than it has ever fallen to the lot of one of her own sons to accomplish.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

The name of Handel has been written in many different ways, the confused and uncertain spelling of the time leading to at least a dozen varieties. It had its origin, no doubt, in Händeler, i.e. trader, as may easily be traced in the archives of Halle. The parents of George Frederic signed themselves habitually Händel, to distinguish their branch of the family from another, collateral branch, also resident in Halle, who signed Hendel. George Frederic began by calling himself Händel, but in Italy and on all Italian compositions he wrote Hendel. In English and French compositions he adopted the form by which he is known in England, Handel, and which he probably thought was the equivalent, according to English vowel-sounds, of the other two.

Georg Händel, father of the composer, was the son of a master-coppersmith. He began life as a barber, and owed his first upward step in the social scale to an advantageous marriage with the widow of another barber, Christoph Oettinger, of Halle, who had probably been his employer, and to whose business he now succeeded. He prospered, and in 1652, when thirty years old, was appointed surgeon to the corporation of Giebichenstein, a small town close to Halle: a few years later he became chamberlain and body-surgeon to the Prince of Saxony and Elector of

Brandenburg. His wife, who was ten years his senior and by whom he had six children, died in 1682, and a few months later, at the age of sixty-two, he married again. His second wife was Dorothea, daughter of Georg Taust, pastor at Giebichenstein. Their first child, a son, died at birth in 1684, the second was Georg Friederich, or, as we know him in England, George Frederic, or Frideric, the subject of this biography. There were also two daughters; Dorothea Sophie, born in 1687, and Johanna Christiania, in 1690. They lived at Halle, on the Saale, in the Duchy of Magdeburg. Their house was situated in a part of the town which, in spite of its uninviting name of the Schlamm (or *mud*), was not otherwise than pleasant; and is probably, though not certainly, identical with the house now known as 4, Grosser Schlamm. Here George Frederic Handel was born, on the 23rd of February, 1685, new style, or 1684, old style, as followed by his English biographers and the inscription on his tombstone. He was baptized, according to the then universal custom, on the next day.

All accounts of his childhood agree in representing him as bright, clever, energetic, and singularly tenacious of purpose. These qualities he inherited; the special genius on which they were brought to bear was all his own. Unlike Bach, the flower and crown of a race of born musicians, there seems no record in Handel's case of his having a single musical or artistic progenitor. From infancy, however, he lived in music, its attraction for him was irresistible, and he began to "musicize" for himself (to quote Chrysander's expression) almost as soon as he could walk, and before he could speak. This inspired all the family and friends with wonder and admiration, in which his parents at first shared; but, as time went on, the thing began to wear a different

aspect, and the father grew alarmed. The boy was a curiosity, no doubt, and music as a pastime was all very well, but it had never occurred to the worthy surgeon to look on it as a serious profession for a child of his, least of all for this, his last, most promising and favourite son. For the others he had been contented with situations in his own station of life; for this one he nourished more ambitious designs. He was to be a doctor of laws, a learned man, and the child's intelligence and thirst for knowledge favoured the hope.

The father set to work to stifle his son's musical proclivities in every possible way, to separate him from musical society, to banish all music from the house, to prevent him even from going to school for fear he should learn notes as well as letters there. He had set himself a difficult task, for the boy's inclination was obstinate, and among his doting admirers were some who conspired in his behalf so successfully as to convey into the house, undiscovered, a little clavichord or dumb spinet. This instrument, much used at the time in convent cells, is so tiny that a man can carry it under his arm, and as the strings are muffled with strips of cloth, the tone is diminutive in proportion. It was safely established in a garret, under the roof, and here, while the household slept, the boy taught himself to play. If the master of the house ever suspected what was going on he connived at it, thinking that probably no very dangerous amount of art-poison could be imbibed under such difficulties. It proved, however, but the thin end of the wedge, and resulted before long in a collision between the wills of father and son, in which the former sustained his first real defeat. He had occasion to visit Weissenfels, where a grandson of his first marriage was chamberlain to the reigning duke. George, who was seven or eight years old, and was

very fond of this grown-up nephew of his, begged to be taken too, but his father refused, turned a deaf ear to all entreaties, and set off alone. Not to be baffled, the pertinacious boy followed the carriage on foot, and after a considerable time overtook it. The father's vexation and wrath were extreme, but futile; scolding and threats were thrown away on this child. He owned his fault, cried bitterly, promised endless good behaviour in the future, but stuck all the time to his original point, which was that this time he must go. The end was that the father had to give in and take him, and this journey practically decided Handel's career.

Music, at Weissenfels, was held in high esteem. The duke, a generous and enlightened prince, was a friend to musicians. And though Heinrich Schütz had been twenty years dead, his long life and noble labours were fresh in the memory of his fellow-townsmen, who were justly proud of their burgomaster's son. He too had been educated for the law, and not till after long doubts and severe struggles did he abandon it, to follow his true vocation.

Little Handel soon found allies. The choir of the ducal chapel admitted him to their practices, and encouraged him to try his hand at the organ. Finding him soon quite able to manage it, they lifted him up to the organ-stool, one Sunday afternoon at the conclusion of the service, and let him play away as best he could. This attracted the notice of the Duke, who listened with astonishment to the performance, and, at its close, inquired who the brave little organist might be. On hearing the whole story from his chamberlain, he summoned father and son to his presence. With the former he expostulated on the folly of coercing a child in the choice of a profession, and assured him, with all due respect for his conscientious scruples, that

to restrain the activity of a heaven-born genius like this was to sin against nature and the public good. As to the boy, he filled his pockets with gold pieces, and exhorted him to be industrious. Here was a change! Music was to be not only suffered, but furthered; his father was to lose no time in finding him a good teacher. Often as old Händel must have stopped his ears to these very same arguments before, he could not choose but listen, now that they fell from ducal lips. He did not change his mind—a doctorship of law remained the goal of his ambition—but he practically acquiesced, and, on his return to Halle, sent his son to study music with Zachau, organist of the Frauenkirche.

Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau, Handel's only teacher, belonged by birth and education to Leipzig, and must not be confounded (as he is by Hawkins) with Peter Zachou, of Lübeck. An organist of considerable repute, and composer of a number of cantatas and organ-works evincing no great originality of thought and a scholarship rather fluent than profound, he was himself only thirty years old when he undertook the education of his illustrious pupil, whose powers, it may be, developed themselves more happily under his congenial but not constraining influence than they might have done under that of some self-concentrated genius or pedantic theoretician. He took a lively interest in all music, and possessed a large collection of scores by various composers of many nations, which in due time he laid before his pupil for study and analysis, causing him to copy a number of them, which must, practically, have been committed to memory in this way; a fact which goes far to explain Handel's frequent use, in after-life, of themes by other men. One book, full of such transcripts, was kept by Handel all his life. It contained airs, choruses, *capricci*, fugues, &c., chiefly by German writers of

the time, some of them skilfully and scientifically elaborated by himself when in his fourteenth year.

At Handel's death this book remained in the possession of Smith, his amanuensis, and passed to his daughter, Lady Rivers, who had it in 1799, when the "Anecdotes of Handel and Smith" were published. When, in 1856, Smith's collection became the property of Victor Schœlcher, this book was found to have disappeared from it, nor has it since been traced.

Transcribing, however, was not the chief part of Handel's work. Exercise in counterpoint and fugue on given themes, and the composition of original cantatas or motets, at the rate, it is said, of one a week, occupied most time. The rest was filled up with organ-practice and some playing of orchestral instruments, especially the violin and oboe. Nothing has come down to us of this early work. Lord Marchmont found, during his travels in Germany, a set of six trio-sonatas, composed by Handel in his tenth year, for two oboes and bass. He presented them to Weidemann, his flute-master, who took the first opportunity of showing them to Handel. The great man, as he was then, surveyed them with a smile, saying, "I used to write like the devil in those days, especially for the oboe, which was my favourite instrument." His childhood was certainly anything but idle. It must not be supposed that his father allowed all this "musicizing" to take the place of classical studies. The boy entered the Latin school, and did not leave it till he had gone through the full curriculum.

When he was in his twelfth year he was allowed to go with a friend of his father's on a visit to Berlin, where, although native artists were less in vogue than Italians, he attracted much notice by his clavier-playing. The Elector, afterwards King Frederick I., desirous of retaining him in his service, offered to send him to Italy for education, but the offer was

declined by Handel's father, on the score of his advanced years and his unwillingness to part with his son. Whether his conduct was due, as most writers assert, to independence of spirit, or whether Chrysander is right in surmising that he still contemplated in his son the future lawyer and avoided any irrevocable musical step, must remain doubtful. In the latter case he was ill-advised to let the boy be launched in the exciting musical atmosphere of Berlin. But, whatever his motive, his decision was a good one.

At Berlin young Handel made his first acquaintance with two famous musicians, whom he was destined to encounter again in very different circumstances. These were Attilio Ariosti and Giovanni Bononcini, one reckoned the best composer, the other the best clavierist of the time. Padre Attilio, an abbé, relieved of his professional duties in consideration of his musical talents, was a genial, amiable man, and conceived for the little George so affectionate an interest that he would hear him play by the hour together, often taking him on his knee, and giving him many a kind and instructive hint. Bononcini, of sombre and jealous temperament, chose to ignore this infant prodigy, as in all probability undeserving of serious notice. Irritated at last by hearing the perpetual praises of this wonderful boy, he thought he would devise a test that should puzzle him. He accordingly composed a difficult chromatic cantata, which he caused Handel to accompany at sight from the figured bass. An experienced man might have found this task a difficult one, but the boy accomplished it, not only accurately, but with ease, and in so masterly a fashion that Bononcini was effectually silenced, and from that time treated Handel with politeness, though never with cordiality. The animus he showed in their rivalry of later years had, perhaps, its origin at this time.

The exact length of Handel's sojourn in Berlin is

uncertain, but he must have been at home again before the end of 1796. In February of the next year his father died, leaving a widow and three children, of whom George was the eldest. From a letter of Handel's, written on the occasion of his mother's death in 1730, and containing allusions to a family vault, and a funeral sermon printed at this time, we gather that they were left in comfortable, though not in affluent circumstances. The mother seems to have been a woman of strong sense and intellect, and of liberal views. She possessed, and retained all her life, the entire confidence and affection of her famous son. During his minority she adhered loyally to the educational programme laid down for him by her husband, and the next few years were passed in diligent study.

When his school-days were over, he entered the recently-established university of Halle, still as a student of law, in February, 1702. For his musical progress he was now dependent on his own resources and industry, as Zachau had long before abdicated the post of teacher, candidly confessing that his pupil knew more than he did himself. In August, 1702, he accepted a year's engagement as organist at the Schloss and Domkirche of Halle. The traditions of this place were far from brilliant, for it had been so miserably paid that no organist of repute could be induced to stay there. In 1607 the salary had been increased to ninety thalers a year, with lodging free. Handel's predecessor, the first man who had enjoyed this magnificent treatment, unfortunately proved unworthy of it, and was dismissed for neglect of his duties. Handel found, on his appointment, that all the cathedral music-books had been lost or made away with, and it devolved on him to supply their place with fresh copies or new compositions, or, failing these, by organ improvisations. All this he did, and a great deal more, as we learn

from the instructions given to his successor in the post, who must have had a very difficult place to fill. It is evident from these that he had voluntarily devoted his two free afternoons in the week to giving vocal and instrumental instruction in the "Reformirte Gymnasium," or principal school, collecting the most promising students for still more music out of school. Nor was this all. It was the custom in Halle for all the choral and instrumental societies to combine in a grand sacred performance every Sunday morning, taking the principal churches of the town in rotation. During Holy Week there were performances every day, the final one being always undertaken by the pupils of the "Gymnasium," who also had an elaborate musical service on all high festivals, in their own church, at five in the afternoon. Handel was soon at the head of all this: it was a fine field for his enterprise and energy, and one where he must have gained invaluable experience in conducting, directing, managing, and all the practical part of a musician's work.

That he became well-known, and acquired importance we learn from the autobiography of Telemann, a gifted young contemporary, four years his senior, and whose early history had been in some points similar to his. Under the guardianship of his mother, who thought music the high road to ruin, Telemann was studying jurisprudence, sorely against the grain. His very professors seemed to conspire in putting temptation in his way. He resolved, nevertheless, to respect the maternal wishes, and started for Leipzig, where he intended to enter the university; but on the way, passing through Halle, he became acquainted with Handel, and, as he says, "had very nearly imbibed fresh tone-poison." He boasts that on this occasion he remained firm, but his firmness was very transient, as he entirely abandoned law for music soon afterwards. He became

organist of one of the churches at Leipzig, and founded the College of Music there. Subsequently he was capellmeister at Sorau and Eisenach, and in 1723 declined the post of cantor at the Leipzig Thomasschule (afterwards offered to and accepted by J. S. Bach) in favour of that of capellmeister at Hamburg, where he remained till his death in 1767. His gifts and accomplishments were extraordinarily wide and varied, and his temporary celebrity was immense. The number of his compositions is simply incredible, his facility and industry have hardly their parallel in musical history. Handel said of him that he would write an eight-part church-piece in the same time it would take another man to write a letter.

In the lively autobiograpical sketch to which we have alluded (contributed by him to Mattheson's book, "Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte") Telemann says that the style of the great Kuhnau served him as a model in fugue and counterpoint, but that in melodic research Handel and he had constant occupation during their frequent intercourse.

A psalm, *Laudate pueri*, and a little concerto for hautboy and strings, first printed by the German Handel Society, are the only specimens of Handel's work at this time which have come to us. Of his numerous other compositions, most of which must have been performed as soon as they were finished, he seems to have thought none worth preserving. Biographically, this may be matter for regret; artistically, it is probably of little consequence. The works of a youth who is undergoing the course of study that Handel pursued generally show more appreciation of models than independence of thought; nor, should we conceive, was he altogether an exception to this rule.

Some existing MS. compositions are ascribed to him, but on insufficient evidence, by Wirthenfeld, in his "Ewiger Kirchengesang." One, in the Berlin

Library, is an oratorio, in two parts or acts, on the subject of Israel's exodus from Egypt. It bears no trace of the master's style, and the words are treated in a way of which there is no example in his work at any time. An extract illustrative of this statement is given in "Chrysander's Life," vol. i. p. 66. A MS. cantata of the time, *Ach Herr, mich armen Sünder*, may possibly, Chrysander thinks, be an early work. Conjecture seems vain: there is at present no good ground for believing in the existence of any more compositions by Handel, than those we have named, belonging to this period.

At the end of his year's appointment at the Domkirche he quitted the university also. Chrysander assumes that his course of study there was completed: it is more likely that he had given little time to it and resolved to abandon it as useless. He had not the turn for autobiography which distinguished many of his contemporaries, and occasional glimpses into this time, afforded by flashes of recollection in later years, are all that we can now obtain. He seems never to have bestowed another thought on his law-career after this date; we are at any rate not told that he did so, nor do we hear of any opposition from his mother to the course he did take.

He now collected his small funds, packed up his MSS., and started for Hamburg.

CHAPTER III.

HAMBURG.

No change could have been more complete than that from the quiet, primitive cathedral-town of Halle to Hamburg, the headquarters of German opera, the brilliant centre of attraction for all the enterprise and all the aspiration of musical Germany. The Hamburg Opera-house owed to Keiser's popularity a renown even greater than that enjoyed by the rival establishments of Berlin and Brunswick. It had had a judicious director in Gerhard Schott, until 1702, when he died. In 1703 Keiser, with one Drüsicke, assumed the management, an event which boded no good to the opera, as he was the last man in the world to pilot any undertaking with safety or success. Easy-going, vain, and frivolous, addicted to luxury and dissipation, he was a veritable Bohemian, sometimes disappearing altogether for a season from the social horizon, at others reappearing to dazzle all eyes by the display and magnificence with which he surrounded himself,—the talk of the town, till fortune changed again.

As to the operas, it is difficult for us now to understand the charm which they exercised. Anything more feeble and futile than the opera-books of the time cannot be conceived. Silly sentiment and shady love-making, under a thin veil of mythological personality constitute their essence. Many of them, however, were much admired in their day, notably those by Christian Postel, who wrote the words of

Keiser's earlier operas, and who has even been called the German Metastasio. He had the art of putting together rhythmical and tolerably sonorous verses which lent themselves well to music, and was so far in earnest in what he did, that he strenuously opposed the interpolation of Italian songs in German operas, and finally abandoned writing for the stage to try his hand at an epic poem, which he did not live to complete. But, at best, these libretti are devoid of sense or life; mere pegs for music to dangle on.

Nor, in Germany, did the performance redeem the lack of dramatic interest. No school of singing existed; the Italian sopranists were for a long time avoided, and a strong popular prejudice against public performance for women had the practical effect of limiting the number of operatic female singers to the very lowest class. At that time (says Riccoboni, quoted by Burney) "the performers in the German opera at Hamburg were all tradesmen or handicraftsmen, when your shoemaker was often the first performer on the stage; and you might have bought fruit or sweetmeats of the same girls whom the night before you saw in the character of Armida or Semiramis." Even at a time when this state of things was slightly improving, the *prima donna* Conradi, gifted with a magnificent voice and great personal beauty, was so uneducated that she could only learn a new part by having it sung over to her day after day, till she was able to remember it parrot-wise.

No one knew that the palmiest days of the Hamburg opera were over, when Keiser became manager. Probably, for the time, the event added *éclat* to the famous establishment. With such a genius for director what might not be expected? What an opening for young and ambitious composers! It is not difficult to imagine how Handel was attracted by the prospect to try his fortunes in this new world.

We know nothing of his first arrival there, whether he came as a complete stranger, or with letters of introduction to any persons likely to help him at starting. We know that the first employment he obtained was the humble post—for such a man—of *ripieno* second violin in the opera-orchestra, which inclines one to think that he must have been independent and alone.

The authority for this fact, as for all others of Handel's Hamburg life, is that of Johann Mattheson, who was his first friend there, and who plays a prominent part in the history of this time, which loses none of its importance in his own account of it. A native of Hamburg, son of a clerk of excise, he had shown great precocity in music both as a composer and performer, and had sung compositions of his own to an organ-accompaniment in a Hamburg church when only nine years old; at sixteen he had made his appearance as tenor singer on the stage, and at eighteen had produced his first opera, *Die Pleyaden*, in which he himself played the principal part. Contemporary writers say of him that he sang but indifferently, a statement which he himself warmly resented and emphatically contradicted. His skill on the harpsichord caused him to be much sought after as a teacher. The transient success of his compositions was due to the personal popularity and cleverness of their author; they were devoid of invention, and have not survived. At twenty-five he quitted the stage on being appointed tutor and music-master to the son of Mr. John Wyche, the British Envoy, and in 1706 was made Secretary of Legation. In 1715 he became cantor and canon of the cathedral, and retained the post until forced by deafness to resign it in 1728. He married an English wife, and translated several English works on politics and jurisprudence, as well as the memoirs of Handel, by Mainwaring, to which he appended sundry anno-

tations and corrections of his own. He was a voluminous writer on musical and other subjects, and possessed critical insight and ability, with a vivacious style and a fund of wit and anecdote which make his books agreeable reading; but these merits are marred by his excessive vanity and egotism, never so glaring or so ludicrous as when he is on the subject of Handel, whom, at this time, he befriended and patronized, and to whom he pays an involuntary homage by his ceaseless effort, long years after, to obtrude the recollection of his own services. Most of his personal reminiscences of the great composer are contained in his "Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte," a book written more than thirty years later, consisting of sketches, some of them autobiographical, of distinguished musicians of the time. To this series, which contains a long and inflated account of himself and his works, he was anxious that Handel should contribute his own autobiography. As Handel could not be induced to do so, Mattheson had, himself, to supply the deficiency, and to tell the story from his own point of view, to which fact we are perhaps indebted for some amusing details.

When Handel, still almost a boy, arrived in Hamburg, Mattheson, twenty-two years old, was in full activity, universally known, at home in society, in the theatre and the orchestra, able and ready to introduce whom he would, where he would. With characteristic keenness he at once recognized in the new-comer a remarkable person, and annexed him, so to speak, as his friend, regarding him with genuine liking and admiration, mixed with pride in a dependant whose dependence reflected credit on himself.

Of this time Mattheson writes:—

"In 1703 he" (Handel) "came to Hamburg, rich in talent and in good dispositions. He very soon made my acquaintance, and in this way got access to all the

organs and choirs in the place, as well as to operas and concerts; he owed to me in particular an introduction to a certain house" (the English Envoy's) "where every one was devoted to music."

The two young men first met in the organ-loft of St. Mary Magdalene's church early in July. Mattheson invited Handel to his father's house, where he showed him every possible attention and respect, besides conferring on him (as he assures us) more material benefits. Handel was free to take his meals there as often at he chose, "in return for which he gave me some hints in counterpoint. I, on my side, was very useful to him in the matter of dramatic style, and so we played into each other's hands. . . . At this time he composed long, very long airs, and well-nigh interminable cantatas, which, though perfect enough in harmony, were wanting in taste and style. But after some schooling at the opera he became quite polished. He was strong on the organ, stronger even than Kuhnau in fugue and counterpoint, especially extempore, but he knew very little about melody before he came to Hamburg. . . . At first he played *ripieno* violin in the opera-orchestra and affected to behave as if he could not count five, being naturally inclined to dry humour. But on an occasion when there happened to be no clavierist he was persuaded to take the place, and proved himself such a man as no one but myself had ever suspected." To this is appended the note, "I know when he reads this he will chuckle secretly, for outwardly he laughs little. Ah! he may perhaps remember the poulterer who travelled with us to Lübeck, and the pastrycook's son who blew the bellows for us at St. Mary's, and our parties on the water together, and a hundred other circumstances still fresh in my mind." The journey to Lübeck was undertaken when Handel had been only a month in Hamburg. Mattheson had been invited, amongst

others, to compete for the post of organist, shortly to be vacated by the celebrated Buxtehude, and induced Handel to accompany him. It was a merry trip. "We perpetrated many double fugues in the coach, *da mente, non da penna,*" says the narrator. On arriving at Lübeck they went the round of the organs and clavicembali in the town, and, after playing on them all, arrived at the conclusion that Handel should always be heard on the organ, Mattheson always on the harpsichord. But they found an unexpected condition coupled with the vacant post which had been the object of their journey. It was required of the successful competitor that he should take Buxtehude's daughter for a wife. Of this honour they professed themselves quite unworthy. They declined to bid for the prize, and retraced their steps to Hamburg.

From subsequent events it would appear that Keiser's appearances at the opera were already intermittent. Mattheson habitually presided at the first harpsichord during the performances, Handel often playing second harpsichord or else acting as Mattheson's deputy.

From the early part of 1704 until August the house was closed altogether, a circumstance which must have caused no small anxiety to Handel, occupied as he then was in the composition of his first opera, *Almira*. In March he wrote to Mattheson, who was away giving concerts in Holland, a letter from which the following is an extract:—

"I often wish to enjoy your very agreeable conversation, which I hope will soon happen, as the time approaches when, without your presence, nothing can be done at the opera. I most humbly entreat you to inform me of your departure from Amsterdam, that I may have an opportunity of showing my regard by coming to meet you." He had, however, a long time to wait. But during this time, in Holy Week and

probably on Good Friday, he had the satisfaction of producing his first important work, the cantata of the *Passion,* according to St. John. This, and Keiser's *Blütige und sterbende Jesus,* first performed during the same week, mark a new departure in German sacred music, and are the earliest examples of Passion oratorios, as we know them now. These differed from the old works based on the Passion-play in that reflective poetry, pious discursions, or meditations more or less bearing on the main subject, were introduced into the sacred narrative, or even substituted for it, as in Keiser's oratorio, where both the Bible words and the time-honoured chorales were dispensed with, the whole story being converted into a poem, diversified in its musical setting by airs, duets, choruses, &c., entirely after the manner of Italian dramatic cantatas. These innovations, which drew down thunders of disapproval from orthodox Hamburg pulpits, were nevertheless supported and adopted by all the rising musicians.

The words of the airs and choruses in Handel's cantata are by Postel. Chorales are done away with, but the Scripture narrative is retained in the recitative. The work is so unlike in its style to any other composition of Handel's, that its authenticity was for a long time considered to be doubtful. Neither name nor date are appended, and the MS., which passed from Polchau's collection to the Berlin library, and was thought to be genuine, has now been pronounced a contemporary copy, written in a hand closely resembling the master's at that time. There remains the authority of tradition, of internal evidence (considered by Chrysander and other good judges to be sufficiently strong), and lastly, of Mattheson, who, twenty years later, when Handel was at the height of his fame though not of his greatness, thought it worth while to unearth this early work and hold it up for

reprehension in his "Critica Musica" as an example of the way in which Passion oratorios ought *not* to be written. It is true that the names of composer and critic are concealed, but the allusions and hints leave no possible doubt as to who was intended. The oratorio had long been eclipsed by riper masterpieces; but Mattheson's book became famous, and is extolled by Marpurg as the first good criticism on vocal music that had ever appeared. In a later age, again, the criticism, itself consigned to oblivion, has been recalled to authenticate the work it attempted to demolish, and which the world, for the sake of its author, will not let die.

Not content with this first attack, Mattheson returned to the subject as late as 1740, in his "Vollkommener Capellmeister," where he gives, at length, specimens of the faulty recitative, which he contrasts with other superior versions of his own. It was not difficult to find flaws in this boyish work. The setting of the words frequently betrays inexperience, especially in recitative, with which Handel was evidently unfamiliar, and which it took him some years to master. In this he might have learnt, and did learn, a great deal from Keiser, whose influence is traceable in the music. Its style is thoroughly German, and reflective of the time, with beauties here and there, suggestive of latent powers as yet undeveloped.

Almira was delayed until early in the next year, and at one time ran a considerable risk of not being produced at all, owing to a quarrel between Handel and Mattheson, who was to sing the hero's part. In November, 1704, there was a performance of Mattheson's opera *Cleopatra,* in which the composer himself played Antony, Handel replacing him at the principal harpsichord. After Antony's death, which which occurs some time before the end, it had been Mattheson's custom to return to the orchestra and

conduct the remainder of the opera. Former conductors had acquiesced in this, but Handel disapproved, and refused to abdicate in favour of the resuscitated Antony. A quarrel ensued: it was said that Mattheson gave Handel a box on the ear, and they proceeded to fight a duel in the market-place, when Handel narrowly escaped being killed, and was only saved by a brass button on his coat, which averted the point of his antagonist's sword.

Through the intervention of Keiser and others they were reconciled, and according to Mattheson, became better friends than ever. There is is a good deal to suggest that their relations, although outwardly cordial, became gradually less intimate, that Handel's attitude was somewhat defensive, and that Mattheson's officiousness occasionally assumed an aggressive tone when his former *protégé* appeared in the light of a rival.

However, the opera was rehearsed at his residence, where, he tells us, Handel brought to him each scene as soon as it was finished, for correction and criticism; we may presume, from the dramatic point of view.

Almira, Königin von Castilien, was produced on the 5th of January, 1705, after which it was performed nineteen or twenty times consecutively, with such brilliant success as to rouse the jealousy and enmity of Keiser, who had thought of setting the same subject himself, and did set it shortly afterwards, with the hope of extinguishing Handel's work, in which he did not succeed.

The text, by Feustking, is little more than a translation from an Italian libretto of the same name, in fourteen songs of which the original language is retained, the rest being all German. This barbarous fashion, although opposed by Postel and Schott, had prevailed ever since the production of Cousser's *Jason* in 1697.

The music exists only in a copy, very incorrect, by Mattheson. From this score Telemann conducted performances in later years, which shows that the opera had a considerable term of life. With much that was conventional and is antiquated, it contains a great deal of beauty, but the best portion of it has been used again and improved upon by the composer in his subsequent works. The recitative is more justly accentuated than in the *Passion*, an improvement which Mattheson (who did not fail to satirize this work also in his writings) must undoubtedly have ascribed to his own teaching. The dances are graceful and charming, and among them is a sarabande which, as the beautiful air "Lascia ch' io pianga," in *Rinaldo*, is known to all the world. The orchestration is, for the most part, slight. The score includes, besides the string quartet, two oboes and three trumpets.

His next opera, *Die durch Blut und Mord erlangte Liebe; oder: Nero*, was produced in the same year. The music is lost. The book, a miserable one, by Feustking, has survived. That Handel groaned over it we know, from an allusion in Hunold Menantes's "Theatralische, galante, und geistliche Gedichte." Menantes, who was a Hamburg contemporary, is expressing wonder "how a musician is to compose anything beautiful to words that are not beautiful," and continues, "when the opera of *Nero* was being composed, did we not hear the very natural complaint that there was neither intellect nor imagination in the poetry, and that to have to set such stuff to music inspired disgust?"

It had only three performances, after which the opera again closed its doors. Mattheson made his last public appearance in the part of the hero. He now became tutor in the family of the English Resident, where, he tells us pretty plainly, he had supplanted his rival as music-master.

Keiser and Drüsicke, encumbered with debts, were at length obliged to fly from Hamburg. Keiser's version of *Almira,* and another opera on the subject of Nero written with an equally malicious intention, were performed during his absence. The airs in these works, prefaced by an eulogium from their composer, were published at the same time. But art itself was brought into disrepute by the character of these, its most eloquent supporters. The whole town was upset by their feuds and scandalized by their example, while from every pulpit innuendoes were hurled against the stage.

After the production of *Nero* Handel seems to have quietly withdrawn from public life, and to have confined himself to teaching and to writing for his pupils, though no specimens of this work have survived. Two cantatas, which Dr. Burney claims to have discovered in a book of similar compositions at Hamburg, were sought for, but not found, by Dr. Chrysander, at the British Museum. It is probable that the best of the harpsichord music was afterwards resumed by the composer in the *Suites de Pièces.* Among all the turmoil of Hamburg society Handel had lived frugally and economically. Out of his savings he now repaid his mother a sum he had borrowed from her at starting. There remained to him two hundred ducats as a foundation for freedom, and he resolved on going to Italy. This idea was suggested to him by Prince Gaston de Medici, brother of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, a devotee of music who had been attracted to Hamburg by the fame of its opera, and had not failed to cultivate Handel's acquaintance. The prince wished to take him at his own expense, a thing so common in those days that Handel might have accepted without loss of dignity, but he seems to have preferred freedom and to have gone independently. Before going he composed another opera for a man

called Sauerbrey, who, up to Easter, 1707, managed the opera for Keiser, and afterwards took it on his own account as a speculation, giving burlesque entertainments which drew crowded houses, interspersed at intervals with serious operas, "for connoisseurs." These were not very frequent, and although *Florindo* was left as a farewell-gift in 1706, it did not come on for performance till 1708, when Handel had been gone two years. As it was then found rather long for the audience, it was split into two operas, called respectively, *Florindo* and *Daphne*, the latter of which was again divided and "lightened" by a masquerading entr'acte and a farce. Mattheson's assertion that Handel remained in Hamburg till 1709, and presided at the production of these two operas, is a mistake. It is disproved, not only by the dates of Handel's Italian MSS., but also by Sauerbrey's preface to the masquerade interpolated in *Daphne*, where he speaks of the composer as "Mons. Hendel, now so much appreciated and so famous in Italy."

Handel probably started shortly before Christmas, 1706. He visited his mother at Halle on the way, and then travelled to Florence, where his fame had perhaps preceded him.

CHAPTER IV.

ITALY.

We have no actual proof that Florence was the first Italian town where Handel broke his journey, but Mainwaring asserts that it was, and there is generally a foundation of truth even for his errors. The error here is in confusing the later visit, which Handel undoubtedly did pay to Florence, with this very probable earlier one. And the invitation from Prince Gaston makes it especially likely that the Tuscan capital should have been the young traveller's first *pied-à-terre*. His sojourn there was very short, but we may assume that it did not pass without his composing something, and among his solo cantatas are about a dozen ascribed by Chrysander to this period. The paper on which these MSS. are written is unlike any used in Italy at that time, and the handwriting, which in a short time became completely Italianized, is still German. None of them have any indication of the place or date of composition, and only three are signed, in two cases "G. F. Händel," in the third, as in all subsequent Italian works, "di G. F. Hendel." One of these three, *La Lucrezia*, although not printed at the time, became well-known and popular in Germany as well as in Italy. It was very probably written for Lucrezia d' André, "detta" Carò, who is styled by Quadrio, "Virtuosa del Principe di Toscana." It was printed long after (very incorrectly) in Arnold's edition of Handel, and there exists a neat manuscript copy of it

made by Smith, probably under Handel's own eye, as the word "Cantata" is added in his handwriting.

At Easter, 1707, Handel was in Rome. He brought with him, and completed there, an unfinished Psalm, *Dixit Dominus*. At the end of the MS. we find the words,—

S. D. G.
G. F. Hendel
1707
11 d' aprile
Romæ

so illegibly written, however, that Fétis and M. Schœlcher have mistaken the 11 for a 4. The choruses of this work are in five parts. The vocal counterpoint lacks the smooth compactness of the Italian writers, while the breadth and lucidity which afterwards distinguished Handel's style were not yet his. Two other Psalms, *Nisi Dominus* and *Laudate pueri*, appear to be, in the main, earlier work. The circumstance that some of the choruses are founded on the Church tones, may have been Handel's reason for thus turning them to account at Rome. The *Laudate* contains some fine themes, one of which, the Doxology, served him, years afterwards, for the chorus, "Glory to God," in *Joshua*. In the soprano air "Qui habitare fecit" we recognize the earliest form of the well-known song in *Joshua*, "O! had I Jubal's lyre." The principal theme is the same in both: it is interesting to compare its different developments in the two versions, and to see in the later one how Handel had succeeded in making the florid, conventional passages of that time subservient to the expression of his leading idea, and conducive to the symmetry of the song.

These seem to have been all the church-pieces he wrote in Italy. His was never the ecclesiastical style; his sympathies were with the dramatic school, which

permanently influenced the music, sacred as well as secular, of his later years.

He continued in Italy his habit of transcribing anything that interested him, a practice which has given rise to the warmest disputes among his biographers, who like to think that all he wrote down was actually his.

Foremost among these disputed works is a Magnificat for double choir which has furnished material for nine numbers of the oratorio *Israel in Egypt*. There exists in the Buckingham Palace collection a copy of this work (incomplete, it has been supposed, but in fact only wrongly put together) in Handel's own writing, from which some eminent critics have concluded that the composition was his own, and that it belongs to his Italian time. It is believed by others to be the work of one Erba, on the strength of a manuscript copy (English, and very incorrect) in the library of the Sacred Harmonic Society, now belonging to the Royal College of Music, which is headed, "Magnificat. Del R^{d} Sgr Erba." The upholders of Handel's authorship take this superscription to mean that the book had *belonged* to Erba, and they repudiate the idea that Handel would or need ever have adopted such large portions of another man's work as have certainly been transferred from the Magnificat to the *Israel*. The paper, however, on which Handel's score of the Magnificat is written is English, not Italian, and corresponds with much of that used by him for his English works, and the handwriting is that of 1735-40, so that if it was an early composition of his own he must, himself, have recopied his original manuscript. As to internal evidence, it is enough to say here that critics are not wanting who pronounce its style as different from that of his early work as it is from that of his later. In the matter of vocal writing it is, indeed, superior to the Latin Psalms which bear his name, and shows a more practised hand. Chrysander dryly remarks that if he

had really Italianized himself so completely and so quickly he would never have left Italy.

As to the question of honesty, those have but little ground to stand on who maintain that Handel was too rich to steal. Judged by the strict modern standard he certainly was a very great thief. According to the generally received ideas of his age nothing would have surprised him more than to hear it. Composition, as he had studied it, is the art of constructing music, of making bricks from a small, fixed allowance of straw, of creating man from the dust of the ground. The theme, like a postulate, was first granted, and the rest had to be worked out afterwards. Existing music was a huge vocabulary of words and phrases, capable of endless combinations and arrangements to suit different ideas and plans, and it was no more expected of a new composition that it should contain none but original themes, than it would be required of a literary work to contain an original proverb or aphorism in every paragraph. Hitherto, ownership had been acquired or conferred in virtue of treatment, and it was really not till Beethoven's time that the principle of property in ideas became generally recognized. That Handel felt his own power of originating themes to be greater than that of his neighbours, would never have appeared to him in the light of a reason why, if other themes served his purpose, he should not employ them, as their composers undoubtedly would have employed his. The way in which he uses his own themes over and over again for different purposes is enough to show that he considered any good subject susceptible of various workings-out, and, like a *chef-de-cuisine* who evolves a new and inimitable dish from materials accessible to every one, he would have replied to those who taxed him with dishonesty, "I only drew from the common stock of ideas, to which I myself made innumerable additions. It is open to

you and to all to draw from it and to do likewise—if you can."

If an Erba was the author of the Magnificat in question, he was probably Dionigi Erba of Milan, a well-known composer about 1690; a man of noble family and styled by Quadrio "Don" Erba. The title "R^{d}" shows him to have been an ecclesiastic, and Dr. Chrysander surmises that he was a canon of Milan, the choir of that city being famous for the performance of double choruses such as those in the Magnificat, to which the vast area of the cathedral was especially favourable. Don Dionigi never appears to have held any musical post, but he collaborated with Valtellina in the composition of the opera *Arion*, in 1694, and with Besozzi and Battestini in that of *Antemio*, 1695. No more facts are known about him, but he certainly enjoyed considerable contemporary celebrity, nor, if he wrote the Magnificat, was this undeserved. Such posthumous fame as he may possess was conferred on him, intentionally or unintentionally, by the author of *Israel in Egypt*.

Some other Latin pieces, probably transcriptions, by Handel, exist. Among these are a Gloria in Excelsis and Kyrie, partly noted down in detail, the rest sketched in; and a motet, "Intret in conspectu tuo," superscribed by Handel himself "Mottetto a 6 voci per ogni tempo ex Ψ. 79. Del E. D. Giovanni Legrenzi."

In the summer of 1707 he must have returned to his old quarters in Florence, where great things were expected of him. Here he produced *Rodrigo*, his first Italian opera, which has only come to us in an incomplete form. Many numbers are adapted from former, Hamburg works, and, of the new, some were afterwards used again. The overture is, in the main, the same as that to *Almira*, but entirely remodelled, and greatly improved, with the addition at the end of a set of dances, on which the curtain rose. Of the six

singers no less than four are soprano voices, the others alto and tenor. The orchestra is very small. Florence apparently boasted of no trumpet-player, as the martial song "Già grida la tromba" is, in default, accompanied by an oboe obbligato. Although the work betokens unfamiliarity with the Italian style and language, it had sufficient merit to secure for it a most favourable reception. The Grand Duke's satisfaction took the substantial form of a service of plate and a purse containing a hundred sequins, while Vittoria, the *prima donna* who played Rodrigo, and of whom some writers have said that she was the Grand Duke's mistress, fell desperately in love with the young composer. Of many theories started about this lady, the most probable is that she was Vittoria Tesi, afterwards known as La Tesi, and one of the most celebrated singers of her time. La Tesi was of Florentine birth, a pupil of Francesco Redi, and, when Handel came to Italy, cannot have been more than seventeen years old. Quanz, who heard her twelve years later, says of her voice that it was a fine contralto, but of such great compass that she could sing high or low with almost equal ease. She had more dramatic power than florid execution, and succeeded best in men's parts. Her nature was vivacious and *emporté* to a degree, and the most extravagant stories are told of her freaks and escapades.

That this impulsive young *diva* was much enamoured of Handel seems certain; "but," says Archdeacon Coxe in his "Anecdotes," "Handel was too prudent to encourage an attachment which might have been the ruin of both." Handel was prudent enough to preserve on this and all similar subjects a discreet silence which ought to have saved him, but has not, from the speculations of biographers. He does not appear, at any rate, to have discouraged Vittoria from going to Venice, as she obtained leave to do, for the purpose of

singing in his *Agrippina,* produced there at the theatre of St. John Chrysostom, early in 1708.

In the chronological catalogue of operas performed at Venice, this piece bears the date of 1710, which some writers have assumed to be that of its first production. But it evidently refers to some later occasion, and one subsequent to Handel's establishment in England, as he is spoken of as "Giorgio Frederigo Hendel, *Inglese.*" It is stated in the same book that the opera kept the boards for twenty years.

The work, though still unequal, is a great advance on its predecessors, and seems to have more life in it. Triple time and dance measures predominate, and from the first energetic bars of the overture the whole gives the impression of having been written in a gay and merry mood. The singers are nine in number. Besides the three sopranos and three altos there were three basses, one of whom, to judge from his songs, must have had a very fine voice of unusual compass. The orchestra, though still of modest dimensions, is larger than in *Rodrigo.* Except in organ-playing, the Italians were far ahead of the Germans in instrumental execution, and the experiments in instrumentation with which Handel's Italian works abound show that the performances he heard had revealed to him possibilities hitherto unsuspected. But it rarely if ever happens to him, even in his overtures, to employ all his resources at once. In the score of *Agrippina* violettas are used, in addition to the ordinary string quartet. There are two oboes and two trumpets, besides the invariable cembalo, which filled in the harmonies to the recitative and other parts, accompanied only by the basso continuo. Flutes (two) are used in one number only—a lovely little song for *Ottone* (alto), accompanied also by violins *con sordini,* violas, and pizzicato basses, sometimes with, sometimes without cembalo. A soprano air, "Bel piacere," has a curiously mixed rhythm,

somewhat in the French style, bars of $\frac{2}{4}$ time alternating at irregular intervals with the $\frac{3}{8}$: a whim, apparently, as nothing in the Italian words suggests this peculiar accent. Another song is identical in theme with a little duet by Marc' Antonio Cesti, which had already been "adopted" by Scarlatti in one of his arias, so from whom Handel borrowed it is doubtful; possibly from a source common to all three. As a just retribution for this, another air, "Ho un non so che nel cor," was caught up by some hearer and imported to London, where, the next year, it found its way, without the author's name, into Scarlatti's *Pyrrhus*, and afterwards became very popular with English words.

Agrippina was received with the utmost enthusiasm; the house rang with cries of "Viva il caro Sassone!" Among the audience—a brilliant one, including all the leading singers from other theatres—was Prince Ernest Augustus of Hanover, in whose suite were many eminent English and Hanoverian gentlemen, and it is probable that Handel received at this time his first invitations to England.

In March, 1708, he was back at Rome, where on the 11th of April he completed the oratorio of the *Resurrezione*, dated from the palace of Marchese Ruspoli. This celebrated amateur and patron of art was a leading member of a great association known as "Arcadia," which, originating in an academy founded some twenty years before by a knot of poets, priests, and *literati*, for the cultivation of national or popular poetry, was now a kind of artistic guild, extending all over Italy, and comprising among its members, of both sexes, most of the rank, the culture, and the talent, in the country. These members were known to each other by pastoral names, and, whatever their difference of station in the every-day world, in Arcadia they were equals. The society's headquarters were at Rome, and its

periodical reunions took place at the villa of Marchese Ruspoli, who subsequently built an amphitheatre on purpose for them.

Arcadia received the young Handel with open arms. A member of the fraternity he could not be, as he was under the age required for admission; but he was an honoured guest and a universal favourite, and the Villa Ruspoli seems to have been his residence during the whole of his Roman stay. These sunny days were a strange contrast to his Hamburg life so short a time before, when he had earned his living by moderately-paid lessons, and had been dependent on Mattheson's patronage for any opportunity of showing his powers. He now found himself, at three-and-twenty, at the summit of his profession—treated by the enthusiastic and demonstrative Italians as a sort of Apollo.

The book of the *Resurrezione* is a poem founded on Scriptural narrative, after the new dramatic fashion of oratorio previously alluded to. Its author is not named, but was not improbably Cardinal Ottoboni, a warm partisan of this rising school, and the head of another *dilettante* society, distinct from Arcadia, though friendly with it, and whose chief objects of cultivation were poetical improvisation and music. The Cardinal was a man of refined taste and princely magnificence. He had a fine collection of pictures and statues, and a first-rate orchestra in his pay, led by Corelli, who had apartments in his palace. Here there were frequent performances of operas, oratorios, and other new works, of which one was, doubtless, the *Resurrezione*. The most remarkable feature in this work is the fuller and more varied instrumentation, and the prominence given to the first violin part.

The string orchestra is sometimes in as many as six parts, the first and second violins being both sub-divided. The bass line includes, besides violoncelli and "violoni" or double-basses, a viol-da-gamba (to

whom a difficult *obbligato* part is given in one song), a theorba, and an arci-liuto or double lute. The wind consists of trumpets—which are freely used—two flutes, two "flauti traversi," and bassoons.

The next work was the curious cantata, or, as it was then called, serenata, *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*, which, remodelled in 1737, served in 1757 as the basis of another, English work, *The Triumph of Time and Truth*. The original words were by Cardinal Panfili, a distinguished Arcadian, and consist of a conversation between Beauty and Pleasure on the one hand, Time and "Disinganno," or Disillusion, on the other. The latter certainly tells the most unpleasant home-truths in musical themes appropriately grim, but in the end prevails, converting the light-minded Beauty, who throws away her adornments with the reiterated declaration, "Io voglio dir 'mi pento,' e non 'mi pentirò.'"

It was the overture to the *Trionfo* which drew from Corelli a complaint of the difficulty of Handel's music. In spite of his adaptability there was a something uncommon in his way of writing—"such a degree of fire and force as never could consort with the mild graces and placid excellencies of a genius so totally dissimilar." Several fruitless attempts Handel had one day made to instruct Corelli in the manner of executing these spirited passages. Piqued at the tameness with which he still played them, Handel snatched the instrument out of his hand, and, to convince him how little he understood them, played the passages himself. But Corelli, who was a person of great modesty and meekness, needed no conviction of this sort, for he ingenuously declared that he did not understand them, i.e. knew not how to execute them properly, and give them the strength and expression they required. When Handel appeared impatient, "Ma, caro Sassone," said he, "questa musica è nel

stilo francese, di ch' io non m' intendo." This is Mainwaring's account; and he adds that at Corelli's desire Handel converted the overture to *Il Trionfo del Tempo* into a *symphony*, more in the Italian style.

Handel's serious character, uncommon in so young and so brilliant a man, did not fail to attract the notice of many ecclesiastical dignitaries in Rome. They would gladly have received him into their Church, but he was firm, perhaps somewhat stolid too. He did not venture on argument, where he must have been at a disadvantage, but merely assured them of his incapacity to enter into dogmatic theories, and of his unalterable resolution to live and die a member of that Church in which he was born and bred. They gave him credit for honesty and good intentions, and let him alone.

In Rome he became acquainted with Alessandro Scarlatti, and also with his son Domenico, the first Italian clavierist of the time, and of no mean skill as an organist. A contest was arranged between D. Scarlatti and Handel, by Cardinal Ottoboni. On the harpsichord the victory was doubtful, some people giving the preference to Scarlatti. "But when they came to the organ, there was not the least pretence for doubting to which of them it belonged. Scarlatti himself declared the superiority of his antagonist, and owned ingenuously that, till he had heard him upon this instrument, he had no great conception of its powers." Domenico Scarlatti was as amiable as he was gifted, and is said to have followed his great rival all over Italy, never so happy as in his society. It was mentioned of him in after-years to Mainwaring by the celebrated oboe-players, the brothers Plas, that as often as he was admired for his great execution, he would mention Handel, and cross himself in token of veneration.

Various other poems and cantatas were written by

Cardinal Panfili, to which the music was composed, sometimes improvised, by Handel, several being not infrequently set in this way by him in the course of a single evening. One was a glowing eulogy of himself in which he was compared to Orpheus. Orpheus had to set his own praises to music, but probably did not care to keep a copy of them, as none has ever been found. One piece which Chrysander describes as his farewell to Rome is entitled *Partenza di G. B. Cantata di G. F. Hendel.* The biographer cannot tell us who G. B. was, but the impassioned words, and sentimental character of the music led him to conjecture that some possible Arcadian romance attaches to the little work. That it may have been so is likely enough, but we hear nothing about it.

His Farewell to Rome was taken in July 1708, after which he was at Naples for more than a year. Corelli and the two Scarlattis went there about the same time: Alessandro Scarlatti assuming the director-ship of the Conservatorio of San Onofrio. At Naples, Handel, as usual, found many friends. Several Neapolitan ladies of high rank were Arcadian shepherdesses, and vied with each other in doing honour to the distinguished young artist. Mainwaring says that here, "as at most other places, he had a palazzo at his command, and was provided with table, coach, and all other accommodations." He wrote now a number of cantatas, of various degrees of merit and importance. Out of some 150 for a single voice, often with no other accompaniment but that of the figured bass, sixteen were afterwards printed by Arnold. The music is not infrequently as dry and uninteresting as the words are weak and senseless. Those "con stromenti," written for Rome, are far superior. More important still, are those for two or three voices, called at the time serenatas. In their dramatic variety and their proportions these approach within a few steps of

opera, and Handel has drawn largely upon them in his subsequent works. Among them may be mentioned, as specially important, *Apollo e Dafne* (a pastoral); *Fillide e Aminta* (of which the overture and principal air were transferred, entire, to *Rinaldo*); *Fileno, Clori e Tirsi; Olinto Pastore* (probably a reminiscence of pleasant hours at the Villa Ruspoli, and after the title of which Handel has added the words, "Tebro fiume; Gloria"); and *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, a pastoral, which has very little in common with the subsequent English cantata on the same subject. Aci is here a high soprano, Galatea a contralto. Polifemo must have been a most magnificent bass, his part requiring a compass of more than two octaves, from D below the bass-staff to A above it. A solo cantata, *Nell' africane selve*, containing all these notes and one more, C below the bass-staff, was doubtless written for the same singer. He may not improbably have been Boschi, who two or three years later sang in London, and into whose part in the opera *Rinaldo* one of the *Aci* songs was introduced. This cantata was suggested to Handel by a certain Donna Laura, and the same has been said of a *Cantata spagnuola a voce sola e chitarra*, more probably written for Donna Cecilia Enrichez, Princess of Squinzano, in Arcadia called "Egeria," the only Spanish lady whose name appears in Crescimbeni's list of shepherdesses at this time, to be found in his "Istoria della Volgar Poesia."

The trio *Se tu non lasci amore* was an early Neapolitan work, and may have been an exercise in vocal style. To this time belong also seven French songs, evidently written for purposes of study, and carefully corrected at some later date. These works are chiefly worth dwelling on because they tell us at least as much of the man as of the musician, and are indeed almost the only records of him at this time, so important to his future development. Profoundly suscep-

tible to all national influences, he was yet not metamorphosed by expatriation, as Hasse was, or as Lulli was. He never tired of observing and cultivating the various kinds of melody peculiar to different countries, and brought the "Siciliana," especially, to great perfection. The specimens he left of this style are remarkable among all his songs for their rare beauty, and he always preserved his basis of individuality, his power of selection, of rejection, and combination. During these three years in Italy he gained that command of melody, and that sympathy with the human voice, and intimate knowledge of its varied powers, which, added to German depth and endued with English breadth and directness, were to have such marvellous results. He also mastered the Italian language and handwriting, while all his perceptions were quickened and extended by acquaintance with the creations of art in other forms. He was especially fond of paintings, and loved all his life to frequent picture-galleries.

Not till late in the autumn of 1709 did he turn his face northwards. England was now his goal. He paid a short, passing visit to Rome, probably at Christmas; a visit made memorable by the fact of his hearing then the shepherd-pipers or "Pifferari," whose simple melody was afterwards echoed and immortalized in the pastoral symphony of the *Messiah*. At Venice he met the celebrated Abbé Steffani, capellmeister at Hanover, and Baron Kielmansegge, an accomplished amateur musician, and an intimate friend of the Elector George of Brunswick, and proceeded in their company to Hanover. On his way he visited his family at Halle, and found his mother well. Of his sisters one had died, the other married, during his absence.

At Hanover he remained for some months. Steffani who, although a Roman Catholic priest, was not, it seems, disqualified by German precedent from holding office under a Protestant prince, became his warm

friend and admirer. A most distinguished and refined musician, he was also a statesman, and, having been entrusted with diplomatic missions of the greatest delicacy and importance, had so acquitted himself as to be made a bishop, and loaded with honours of all kinds. The duties and responsibilities of an ambassador and a capellmeister were practically incompatible, and he now retired from his musical post, recommending Handel to the Elector as his successor. Handel seems to have hesitated a good deal before accepting the honour. Great pressure was being put upon him to come to England by the Duke of Manchester and several other influential noblemen, many of whom he had met in Italy or at Hanover. But the Elector offered him a pension of 1500 crowns to stay, and Handel finally accepted this and the capellmeistership, on the condition of a year's leave of absence, which was granted.

He paid a short, promised visit to the Elector Palatine at Düsseldorf, an art-devotee who would fain have detained him altogether, had it been possible, and at last arrived in London, late in the autumn of 1710.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST ESTABLISHMENT IN ENGLAND.

When Handel arrived in England, dramatic music was at a low ebb, low even for this country, considerably behind its neighbours in this matter. The taste for opera existed indeed, but its development was singularly tardy. For a century past there had been, here and there, individual efforts to introduce unbroken musical entertainments on the stage, by engrafting something like the recitative of the Italians on the masque, or play with incidental music, to which the English were accustomed. But these were isolated experiments, and had no result in the establishment of an opera, properly so called. And even in those plays said to have been performed in the "stilo recitativo" there is nothing to show that they were really set to music and sung throughout. As early as 1617 a masque of Ben Jonson's, with music in "stilo recitativo" by Nicolo Laniere, was represented at the house of Lord Hay, for the entertainment of Baron de Tour, the French Ambassador.

In 1659 Sir William Davenant, a strenuous promoter of the cause of lyric drama, had his *Siege of Rhodes* represented at Rutland House, with music supplied by Dr. Colman, Cook, Henry Lawes, and Hudson. Langbourne, in his "Account of the English Dramatic Poets," says that this and other plays by the same author were acted in "stilo recitativo." This is con-

firmed by Evelyn, who saw the *Siege of Rhodes* in 1663, when it was revived with the addition of a second part, and records the fact in his diary, with the comment, "It was in recitative music." But Dr. Burney, who had carefully examined the first edition of the play, denies this, saying that, although each act was preceded by instrumental music, there is every evidence that the words were entirely declaimed, with no assistance from music but a couple of songs and a "consort of instrumental music adapted to the sullen dispositions of Diogenes," which was played behind the scenes. All this suggests the inference that the *recitative* may have been rather an intoned or monotoned declamation than actual music. In 1674, Evelyn writes, "I saw an Italian opera in music, the first that had been seen in England of this kind." This may refer to the fact of its being in the Italian language, but Evelyn does not say what was performed, nor where he saw it. The first English dramatic work entirely in music is Purcell's *Dido and Æneas*, written in 1680, which at the time of its production, and for long after, remained but little known. His subsequent compositions of this kind were, none of them, continuous music dramas, and the need for these was not felt while he lived. During that time the native resources of England, in music and in singers, were adequate to all her demands. Still, to quote Purcell's own words in the preface to *Dioclesian*, "Music was yet but in its nonage, a forward child which gives hope of what it may be hereafter in England when the Masters of it shall find more encouragement," and his death marred its brightening prospects.

Meanwhile, wonderful accounts of the opera in Italy were brought to England by noblemen and wealthy commoners who had travelled abroad. Attracted by the rich and hitherto little-cultivated field which London offered to them, foreign singers began to

arrive, especially the *castrati*, with their wonderful vocal skill and their unbounded pretensions. They could only sing their own pieces, and those in their own language, and, of these pieces, operas, so-called, were strung together for them. Few of the English singers who assisted in such entertainments were capable of performing in Italian, and the result was a mixture of languages—the same Babel which prevailed at Hamburg. Nor, as these operas were only a succession of songs, did this matter very much.

The first musical drama publicly performed after the Italian manner, with the dialogue and narrative in recitative, alternating with measured melody in the airs, was *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*, the text translated by T. Clayton, from an Italian opera of the same name by Stanzani, played at Bologna in 1677. The singers were English; but between the acts there were Italian songs and dances by Signora Margarita de l'Epine. In spite of contemptible music, this had twenty-four representations in two years. "The English," says Burney, "must have hungered and thirsted extremely after dramatic music at this time to be attracted and amused by such trash."

Camilla, music by Marc' Antonio Bononcini, words translated from Stampiglia's text by Owen McSwiney, director of the theatre, was first performed in April, 1706, at Drury Lane. It was represented sixty-four times in four years.

It was now that Addison, moved to indignation by the senseless absurdities which abounded in these entertainments, began to inveigh in the *Spectator* against the proclivity of the time towards what he considered could never be otherwise than a degenerate and puerile form of amusement. Although destitute himself of true dramatic or musical sympathy, he thought himself qualified to improve, if not to cure, this state of things, which he ascribed

and partly with truth, to the want of a rational opera-libretto. He accordingly wrote a poem on the subject of "Rosamond," and had it set to music by Clayton, a man devoid of talent. But sound sense, correct grammar, and polished versification do not by themselves constitute a dramatic skeleton. *Rosamond*, lacking in life and in interest, failed, living with difficulty through three representations—a disappointment which embittered Addison, and added gall to the satire with which he afterwards lashed the follies of Italian opera.

After this failure was produced *Thomyris, Queen of the Scythians*, written by Motteux, and adapted by Heidegger to airs of Scarlatti and Bononcini, with recitatives by Pepusch. This medley was sung in English till the arrival of two singers, Valentino Urbani and a lady known only by the mysterious title of "the Baroness"—a good singer, of German origin—who sang their parts in Italian. The opera was now transferred from Drury Lane to the Haymarket; English drama entrenching itself at Drury Lane.

In 1708 was performed the *Triumph of Love*, a pastoral by Cardinal Ottoboni, music by C. C. Giovanni and Gasparini—English words adapted to the airs by Motteux. The singer, V. Urbani, or Valentini as he was called, directed this representation, and added to it some choruses with dancing after the French fashion, as an experiment.

In December, 1709, the *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* of A. Scarlatti was brought on to the English stage, translated by McSwiney and arranged by N. Haym, who added a new overture and several songs "of much merit." This drama introduced to the London public the first Italian singer of genius they had ever heard, the Cavaliere Nicolino Grimaldi, known as Nicolini, who was drawn hither by the report of our passion for foreign operas, "without any particular invita-

tion or engagement." A fine singer and a noble actor, he extorted the praise of Addison himself, who wrote of him, in 1712, as "the greatest performer in dramatic music that is now living, or that, perhaps, ever appeared upon a stage;" and wished that our tragedians would copy after this great master in action, whose playing gave "new majesty to kings, resolution to heroes, and softness to lovers."

After *Clotilda* of Conti, came *Almahide*, neither poet nor composer of which are named, but which was the first opera performed in England wholly in Italian and by Italian singers. *Hydaspes*, which followed, was edited, if not written by Nicolini, who distinguished himself by the famous lion-fight in his part. The music was by Mancini. It was succeeded by *Etearco* a pasticcio. This period is referred to in the words of Colley Cibber: "The Italian opera had been long stealing into England, but in as rude a disguise and unlike itself as possible, in a lame, hobbling translation into our own language, with false quantities, or metre out of measure, to its original notes, sung by our own unskilful voices, with graces misapplied to almost every sentiment, and with action lifeless and unmeaning through every character."

It was at this juncture that Handel appeared, to fill the formidable gap. During thirty years he produced and performed a series of operas on the Italian model, yet superior to those of Italians, often containing much that is supremely beautiful and original, and where this is not the case, still so complete and so artistic in execution and workmanship that English ears were trained by them to a standard of taste hitherto unknown, and without which the greater works of which these operas were the precursors might have fallen for want of appreciation.

Great impatience was expressed, on Handel's arrival,

to hear an opera of his composition, soon gratified by the production, on February 24, 1711, of *Rinaldo*. The book was founded on the well-known episode in Tasso's "Gerusalemme Liberata," first translated into English by Aaron Hill, director of the Haymarket Theatre, and then done into Italian verse by Giacomo Rossi. Handel was in such haste to complete this work that he set the poem faster than it could be fashioned by his librettist, who has left in his preface the following amusing, half-apologetic account of the affair:—"Indulgent reader . . . . Herr Hendel, the Orpheus of our time, hardly gave me time to write, while composing the music, and I saw, with stupor, an entire opera set to harmony with the highest degree of perfection in one fortnight. Let this hurried work, therefore, satisfy you, and, if not deserving of your praise, do not withhold at least your compassion, which indeed will be only justice to the limited time in which it was accomplished." Over this assertion, which he thought incredible, Addison made very merry.

In *Rinaldo* the true Handel begins to show himself. The style of the opera is, as Burney has it, "compact and forcible," there are many numbers of remarkable beauty, and the standard of excellence is high throughout. "Cara sposa," "Augelletti che cantate," "Vieni, o cara;" the charming little Siciliana in rhythms of six bars, "Se vago rio;" the forceful bass song "Il tricerbero umiliato" (very popular afterwards as a British bacchanalian ditty to words beginning "Let the waiter bring clean glasses"); the bright and inspiriting march—all these rank among the best things in his operas, and although, as a whole, *Rinaldo* was afterwards surpassed by some of its successors, it was not always equalled and never eclipsed. Several other numbers in it are taken, wholly or in part, from previous works, according to Handel's frequent

custom, which helps to account for the rapidity of its completion. The first part of the overture, and the duet "Fermati," come from the cantata *Fileno, Clori e Tirsi;* the air "Bel piacer" belongs (words and music) to *Agrippina;* the bass song "Sibilar" to *Aci, Galatea, e Polifemo;* "Lascia ch' io pianga," already used as a song in the *Trionfo del Tempo,* was originally an instrumental sarabande in *Almira.*

The opera was mounted with a scenic magnificence extraordinary at that time, and a degree of spectacular realism which drew down upon it the satire of Addison and Steele. The garden of Armida, in the second act, was filled with living birds, let loose to fly about the stage. These should have been of many sorts, but the season being winter, they had to be all sparrows. This did not, however, approach the similar extravagances perpetrated at Venice in the operas of Freschi and others at the close of the preceding century, of which an account may be read in Burney's "History."

The principal singers in *Rinaldo* were Signore Pilotti Schiavonetti and Isabella Girardeau (or Calliari), with Nicolini, and the fine bass, Boschi. There are three sopranos, three altos, and one bass; the only chorus is that at the end of the opera, and was sung by these seven chief vocalists. This is as much chorus as was usual at the period, and in many of Handel's other operas there is no more: occasionally others are introduced at the opening or the close of an act, but often these only consist of short, harmonized tunes, sung with two or three voices to a part, by the solo-singers themselves. In some works even this variety is impossible, no voices being used but soprano and alto. Tenor parts are rare, and though Handel had, at different times, some first-rate bass singers, for whom he wrote superb songs, the bass voice was then very little esteemed. Songs formed the staple of the opera,

enchained by recitative. Duets were occasional: in *Rinaldo* there are three. Handel by degrees introduced more concerted pieces into his dramas; trios, and, though more rarely, quartets.

Rinaldo made a great impression. Walsh, the publisher, is said to have cleared 1500*l.* by the sale of a volume of songs from the opera; a fact which drew from Handel the humorous suggestion that their respective *rôles* as composer and publisher should, on the next occasion, be reversed. "You shall compose the opera," he said, "and I will sell it." The composer's reputation was at once established, and he soon became the principal figure in London musical circles, of which the most musical, and, out of the opera, the most important, was that which met at the house of Thomas Britton, famous as the "Musical Small-Coal Man." Britton, a man of lowly extraction, who actually made his living by hawking about the streets small-coal, which he carried in a sack on his back, had in his spare time contrived to acquire an extensive knowledge of old books, of chemistry, and of music, and to form a collection of musical instruments. His especial devotion was to music, which he cultivated practically, as well as theoretically, being himself a performer on the viol-da-gamba. He formed a kind of club for musical practice, of which the concerts were at first free; afterward admission was made subject to a 10*s.* subscription, and these were the first chamber-concerts ever established in London. They took place in a long, narrow room over his shop, approached by a stair outside the house, and so low that a man could easily touch the ceiling with his hand. But the first artists of the day were to be seen and heard here, and the dingy little apartment was crowded with people of rank and fashion, to whom coffee was served at a penny a dish. This unique man paid for his familiarity with the great by the reputation he acquired among his ignorant "equals" of being a magician,

an infidel, and heretic. His nervous organization was too sensitive for its surroundings, and he was literally frightened to death by a ventriloquist in 1714.

In Britton's house Handel soon came to preside at the harpsichord, acknowledged as the master of masters by a company as distinguished as that which assembled in the Arcadian palaces of Rome and Naples. But he had spent a large part of his year's furlough, and at the close of the season he returned to his capellmeistership at Hanover, probably with the intention of staying no longer than was necessary, but of returning to England shortly, at a time when the remainder of his leave might be more profitably employed than in the summer. From his correspondence with Andreas Roner, a German musician in London, we gather that he was studying English with assiduity. In the autumn he visited his relations at Halle, and stood godfather to his sister's child, Johanna Friederike Michaelsen. For this niece, who inherited most of his property, he entertained all his life a special affection.

He remained sixteen months at Hanover, and produced there ten of his chamber-duets, works in which he has avowedly taken another man for a model. Steffani had brought this style of composition to a great perfection, and, although he was the author of many larger works, it is by his chamber-duets that he will be remembered. Handel's duets are not only modelled on these, but, in some instances, borrowed in the leading idea, which, however, he works out in an independent and a totally original fashion.

There was an excellent orchestra at Hanover, especially strong in hautboys, and it is probable that some of the *Hautboy Concertos* were composed at this time. They are not concertos in the modern sense of the word, but orchestral "suites," in some of which a slight prominence is given to the hautboy.

A set of German songs belongs also to this Hanover visit.

He had promised his English friends to return as soon as he could get leave, and this he did towards the end of 1712, when he reappeared at the opera on November 26th with *Pastor Fido*. From the Opera Register, kept by Francis Colman, from 1712 to 1734, we learn that the directorship had twice changed hands since Handel's departure, and had now passed back to McSwiney.

Pastor Fido is the first name on the list; written and mounted in great haste, it did not draw a full house. It was taken up again, improved, and extended by Handel in 1734. *Theseus* appeared on January 10, 1713, and, though not superior in merit to *Pastor Fido*, was more successful. Nicolini, however, had gone, and was replaced by Valeriano, an inadequate substitute. The other singers were, Valentini and Pilotti Schiavonetti, Miss Barber, and Leveridge. McSwiney presently became bankrupt, and, being unable to pay his performers, absconded. The singers determined to continue the opera on their own account, dividing the proceeds. Handel, who probably had been a sufferer in the business, had a benefit at the last performance, which was advertised "for Mr. Hendel, with an entertainment on the harpsichord." The management was now taken by Heidegger, known as the "ugly Swiss Count," an unscrupulous speculator, with neither mental nor moral graces to atone for the proverbial hideousness of his outer man.

The next task undertaken by Handel was, however, more important than these somewhat colourless operas. It was his ambition to be entrusted with the composition of the Te Deum and Jubilate for the solemn service of thanksgiving to be held in celebration of the Peace of Utrecht. The Master of the Music to the English Court was, by rule, always an Englishman, and all

official commissions for state occasions of this kind, were, by precedent, considered the birthright of native composers. Nor, in principle, does this seem so outrageous as some biographers represent it. Had Handel, deserving the commission as he undoubtedly did, failed to obtain it, there might have been cause for complaint, but as it was given to him we must admit that, whatever was said, justice was done. He had finished his task by the 14th of January, 1713, but was for some time uncertain as to whether his music was to come, or not, to public performance. In the meantime he composed the *Ode for Queen Anne's Birthday*, February 6th.

The *Utrecht Te Deum* and *Jubilate* were performed in St. Paul's cathedral on the 7th of July. The queen, being indisposed, was, after all, not present, but she probably heard the music soon after in her private chapel, and conferred on the composer a life-pension of 200*l.* a year. In this work Handel has, without borrowing from them, followed closely in the steps of English writers. It is modelled on Purcell's *Te Deum for St. Cecilia's Day*, and, though not indeed more beautiful in its ideas than that, is more massive and elaborate in execution. Its fine choruses, in four, five, six, and seven parts, the masterly treatment and contrast of vocal and instrumental masses, must have been a revelation to the English. Yet this was but the beginning of his great choral works; within the limits of opera he had already attained to maturity.

He had in England, as in Italy, found many admirers and some friends among people of distinction in other lines than his own, men of rank, of fortune, of culture, and of intellect. He had passed several months at the house of Mr. Andrews, a rich amateur who, when not in London, lived at Barn Elms, in Surrey. For three years he resided almost constantly with the Earl of Burlington, whose retired country-house was the resort of all the choicest spirits among the artists and literary men

in London. This secluded spot was situate in *Piccadilly*. When George I. expressed surprise that this distinguished leader of fashion should have gone to live so far out of town, Lord Burlington replied that, as a lover of solitude, he had sought for a spot where no one was likely to come and build near him! He was an unselfish, large-hearted, cultivated man, who had, too, lived in Italy and imbibed the love and veneration for art and artists which distinguished the Italian noblemen. At Burlington House Handel became well acquainted with Pope, Gay, and his staunch friend, ardent admirer and future champion, the witty and charitable Dr. Arbuthnot, at once a competent critic and an enthusiast in music. Pope, who was absolutely unsusceptible of its influence, and confessed himself so, one day asked Arbuthnot to tell him his real opinion in regard to Handel as a master of that science. The reply was, "Conceive the highest that you can of his abilities, and they are much beyond anything you *can* conceive."

Handel's compositions, however, were few just now, nor during these butterfly phases did he ever execute any very great work, although he was always learning.

Silla, afterwards used again in *Amadigi*, and not all of it new, was probably written for private performance. Handel's leave of absence had long since expired, and his conscience must have pricked him when he thought of Hanover and his appointment. In August, 1714, Queen Anne died, and within six weeks arrived the Elector of Brunswick, to be crowned as George I. He had reason to be vexed with both his principal musicians; with the capellmeister for neglect, with Farinelli, the concert-master at Hanover, for obtrusiveness. In the thick of all the bustle consequent on the court's leaving Hanover, this gentleman wrote and thrust into the elector's notice a composition to the words, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Handel was some-

what afraid to go near his injured master, who, however, could not help hearing of him. The new royal family cared for music and for no other form of art. They were not edified by entertainments in a language they did not understand, and the English drama drooped while the Italian opera revived, the Prince and Princess of Wales being present nearly every night.

Rinaldo was remounted, with Nicolini, who had returned, in the principal part. *Amadigi*, by Handel, was produced towards the end of the season, and repeated four times. At the second performance the concerto now known as the *Fourth Hautboy Concerto* was played between the acts. A great deal of the opera is adapted from *Silla;* the whole stands high among the series to which it belongs. It may be an indirect testimony to its popularity that parodies and burlesques in imitation of it drew crowded audiences to other theatres. Meanwhile, the awkwardness of the situation between the king and Handel increased every day. The account of the manner in which a reconciliation was at last brought about has been repeated and believed by every biographer since Mainwaring, including Chrysander, in his first volume, who, however, by the time he wrote his third volume had discovered some evidence tending to throw doubt on its veracity. The story goes that Baron Kielmansegge, the common friend of both king and capellmeister, took occasion of a grand water-party, attended by the whole court, to engage Handel to compose some music expressly for this festivity, the result being the celebrated *Water Music*, of which Handel secretly conducted the performance in a boat that followed the royal barge. The king, as delighted as he was surprised by this concert, inquired at once as to the author of the music, and then heard all about it from Kielmansegge, who took upon himself to apologize most humbly for Handel's bad behaviour, and to beg in his name for condonation of his offence. Where-

upon his Majesty made no difficulties, but at once restored him to favour, and "honoured his compositions with the most flattering marks of royal approbation."

A water-party did take place in August, 1715, but the brilliant occasion when a concert of music was given, for which special music was written "by Mr. Hendel," and when Kielmansegge was present, and when probably, therefore, the *Water Music* was produced, only happened in 1717, when peace had long been made, and pardon sealed with a grant to Handel of 200*l.* a year. The ice was perhaps broken by Geminiani, the great violinist, who, when he was to play his concertos at court, requested to be accompanied on the harpsichord by Handel, as he considered no one else capable of doing it. The petition was powerfully seconded by Kielmansegge and acceded to by George I.

In July, 1716, the king found himself free to escape for a short time from the distracting duties of his new position, and to go on a visit of a few months to Hanover. Among his numerous suite was his capellmeister. How long Handel stayed away on this occasion is somewhat uncertain, owing to the number of conflicting statements. Mattheson is probably wrong in his statement that he spent the year 1717 at Hanover. He composed there his second *Passion Oratorio*, of which Mattheson says that the score was sent to him from England, and of which he speaks as a composition much older than his own oratorio to the same words, written in 1718. This oratorio, the last of Handel's German works, has for its subject the "Passion of Christ," as related in a poem by Brockes, which obtained some notoriety and was set by Keiser, Mattheson, and Telemann, as well as Handel. The words are conceived in a spirit to which Handel had at no time been sympathetic, and from which he had now become thoroughly estranged, and which manifests

itself in a certain, somewhat sickly, personal sentiment, rather than in elevation or solemnity, with regard to religious themes. It is strange how old associations reassert themselves in this German work, which, in its many real beauties, still suggests the influence of Keiser and of Steffani. It shows that as yet Handel had, as Chrysander puts it, not found his own track, but had only "planted a larger foot in the footsteps of others." The autograph of this *Passion* has not been preserved, but, besides the two copies at Buckingham Palace, there are two in the Berlin Library, both dating before 1720. One, formerly in the collection of Count Voss, is, half of it, in the handwriting of J. S. Bach, and entitled "*Oratorium Passionale.* Poesia di Brockes et musica di Hendel."

Handel at this time renewed acquaintance at Anspach, with an Englishman, John Christopher Smith, whom he had formerly known at Halle, where they were students together at the university. Coxe, the author of the "Anecdotes of Handel and Smith," says of Smith that he became so captivated with the great master's power that "he accompanied him to England" (Chrysander says he only came in 1719), "where he regulated the expenses of his public performances, and filled the office of treasurer"—we may add of copyist —"with scrupulous fidelity." He left his family in Germany, and only sent for them four years after he had settled in England. His son afterwards became Handel's pupil, and acted as his amanuensis.

It seems almost certain that Handel returned to London very early in 1717. *Rinaldo* was enjoying a new lease of life, being revived with greater splendour than ever, and with excellent singers, including Nicolini, Bernacchi, and the German bass, Berenstadt, who had probably been found and engaged by Handel during his absence from England. These brilliant prospects were, however, soon clouded, and did not prove to be, as was hoped, the dawning of a new and bright day in

the operatic calendar. They were but a flash, a last struggle, after which for a time it totally collapsed. This was a period of political confusion, almost of anarchy in ideas and opinions; the very royal family was divided against itself, while in society there was neither peace nor unity nor principle, but on all sides reigned scandal, excitement, and treachery. There was no footing for any true art, the fashionable entertainments were French ballets, Frenchified English plays, and wild mercantile speculations after which the world was crazy. McSwiney, who had found means to return, professed to give English operas at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and under this title, was performing the old Italian pieces, *Camilla*, and *Pyrrhus*, badly translated, badly sung, badly represented, in a bad house.

An asylum was opened to Handel, whither he escaped from this scene of confusion. He was requested to undertake the place of director to the private chapel of James, Duke of Chandos, at Cannons, near Edgware. This duke lived in such regal style as to be commonly called the "grand duke." Wherever he went, he was attended by a body-guard of a hundred Swiss, who even escorted him to church. He did not escape from the universal mania for speculation, and his fortune received several shocks from the bursting of successive bubbles, which could not, however, overthrow it. Pope called his palace "Timon's Villa," and turned his somewhat ostentatious magnificence into ridicule in a satirical epistle, by which, and by the curious story of his third marriage—with a servant-girl whom he rescued from the cruelty of her first husband, ostler at an inn—he will be remembered. The story of his marriage may be read at length, in Miss Spence's novel, "How to be rid of a wife."

In the chapel at Cannons there was a daily musical service, "performed by a choir of voices and instruments, perhaps superior in numbers and excellence to that

of any sovereign prince in Europe." His first chapel-master was Dr. Pepusch, a Prussian by birth, naturalized in England, a respectable musician whose compositions are more consonant with the rules than with the laws of art. He is said to have retired in Handel's favour without dissent or protest, acknowledging his superior merit. If this is true, he deserves credit. He can hardly, however, have appreciated to the full the greatness of his rival, for he spoke of him, long after, as a "good, practical composer," apparently thinking that he himself might have added something on the theoretic side.

Handel was to live at Cannons in complete independence, to direct the choir, play the organ, and write music for the chapel. The years he spent there were as fruitful as they were industrious, and the works he wrote now were, in quality as well as quantity, very different from those he threw off while living as a guest in some palatial mansion. Here, stimulated by a sense of responsibility, and inspired by the means of realization at his command, he set to work with ardour, producing between the date of his appointment and the year 1720 the twelve fine anthems known as the *Chandos Anthems*, the two *Chandos Te Deums*, the masque or cantata *Acis and Galatea*, the oratorio of *Esther*, and most of the *Suites de Pièces* for harpsichord. These last were written for the royal princesses, the Prince of Wales's daughters, to whom he had been appointed music-master at a salary of 200*l.* a year, and one of whom, the Princess Anne, was his favourite pupil, and remained his faithful friend.

The *Chandos Anthems* have been supplanted by finer works, but they have been unjustly neglected. They are grander than the German *Passion*, more solid than the Continental cantatas, more varied and on a more extensive scale than motets. From examination of them it is clearly gathered that Handel had at first a comparatively small choir, but that it was gradually

enlarged to meet the requirements of his music, and became a situation coveted by the best cathedral-singers. The *Anthems* increase throughout in number of parts and in importance. In them, as in all works written for the duke's chapel, which consisted only of men and boys, there is no part for contralto, the line below the soprano being written for a high tenor. This fine cycle of songs of praise may be looked on as a series, more or less connected, and they were, after Handel's death, actually adapted by Arnold and Toms to an oratorio, which they called *Omnipotence*.

By the composition of *Esther*, for which the duke paid him 1000*l*., Handel made his first step into the region of oratorio proper. The work is on the boundary-line between drama and oratorio, as befits its biblical, though scarcely religious subject. The book is a poem by Humphreys, partly translated from Racine, and tells the story of *Esther* in a succession of scenes with interpolated moral reflections. This kind of foundation was never that on which Handel raised his finest structures, and is one which does not enlist modern sympathies. Regarded as a sacred work, *Esther* lacks elevation, while as an opera it would want vivacity. The dramatic element prevails in it, but it is raised by its choruses above the Italian operas which Handel wrote, as he was obliged to do, within the limits and according to the requirements of the stage at the time when he lived. His theatrical proclivities were strong, and he would seem to have been haunted by the idea of what we now call grand opera, in which scenes, stories, sentiments, may be represented on a vast stage by numbers of people, illustrated and expressed in music by the co-operation of masses.

Opera could not then be raised to this height, and he transferred his aspiration to oratorio, but he clung for a long while to his hopes of the theatre, and attempted giving *Esther* on the stage in 1732, when he added to it several songs and a chorus.

The overture to *Esther* was, and still remains, especially popular, and for a number of years was played annually at St. Paul's on the occasion of the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy.

Acis and Galatea was the most perfect work Handel had yet produced. Nothing in its character is ambiguous; it is secular, pastoral. By its fine choruses it oversteps the bounds of the serenata, and is in some respects more akin to the masque, only there is no spoken dialogue. In modern days the word cantata has been applied to compositions of various degrees of importance, and may be used to characterize *Acis and Galatea*. Although it was afterwards performed on the stage with full accessories, it is no opera. The story is told in the music, with little recitative and less need for action, and is, in fact, a musical poem or novelette, such as has since been attempted in symphonic form.

To point out here the beauties of so familiar a work is superfluous. The vivacity and vigour of the music, and its structure, perfect in simplicity, make it as fresh to-day as when it was first performed at Cannons before the "grand duke."

The words were written by Gay. The orchestra employed was small, and a great deal was left, as is the case in all Handel's works, to be supplied by the organist from the indications afforded by the figured bass. The wind-instrument parts with which, now, *Acis* is generally performed, were added by Mozart; Handel's score contains two hautboys only.

This beautiful little work marks the arrival at maturity of its composer's genius. The time of experiment was over, that of achievement had come. His outer life continued for many years yet too bustling and full of active enterprise to allow of the realization of his highest conceptions, but, as he himself said in 1720, "one must first learn what has to be learnt, and then go one's own way."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

HANDEL retained his post at Cannons till 1721, but it was by no means the exclusive object of his energies or his labours for the whole of that time. Two years before he quitted it he entered into an undertaking on a large scale, started by a few noblemen and other amateurs, for the establishment of Italian opera in London on a footing completely new.

In a letter written early in 1719 to his brother-in-law Michaelsen, whose wife, Handel's sister, had recently died, he alludes to this. The letter is, as most of his letters were, in French. Only on one occasion, after his mother's death in 1730, did he write to his family in German. After expressing his fervent wish that he could be with them, and his hope of being able to pay them a visit soon, he proceeds:—

"C'est à mon grand regret que je me vois arrêté ici par des affaires indispensables, et d'où, j'ose dire, ma fortune dépend, et lesquelles ont traîné plus longtemps que je n'avois cru."

These indispensable affairs were those of the new opera, which, according to the scheme of its founders, was to be supported and carried on by means of a subscription. A fund of 50,000*l.* was raised for this purpose, the king contributing 1000*l.* a year, as well as the permission to the new society to call itself the Royal Academy of Music. It consisted of a governor,

a deputy-governor, and twenty directors, elected annually. The practical manager was Heidegger. The Duke of Newcastle was governor for the first year, and among the directors was Handel's old friend, Lord Burlington. To Handel the company looked for important help, and the Duke of Chandos did not hinder him from taking an active share in the concern. He was engaged as composer to the new house, and was commissioned to go abroad in quest of singers. He started at the end of February, 1719, as was announced in the following terms by *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal:* "Mr. Hendel, a famous master of musick, is gone beyond sea by order of his Majesty, to collect a company of the choicest singers for the opera in the Haymarket." He probably was away for several months, as part of a letter from Field-Marshal Count Fleming (quoted at length in Chrysander's book) alludes to his presence at Dresden in October. He was attracted there by the brilliant assemblage of singers who were taking part in the gala performances in honour of the Electoral Prince's marriage with the Archduchess Maria Josepha, and of whom he secured several for the Royal Academy. Chief among them were the famous *contralto*, Francesco Bernardi, called Senesino, one of the first singers in Europe, Berselli, Boschi, and Signora Durastanti. At Düsseldorf he engaged Benedetto Baldassare. None of these artists were free to come for some months, and Senesino not for a year. And though the Dresden company was broken up soon after, owing to Senesino's constant quarrels with Heinechen, the chapel-master there, Handel, acting for the Royal Academy, did not take advantage of this, but adhered to his original arrangement. He was probably in England again by the end of the year, occupied in preparations for the coming season, and in rehearsing and performing *Acis and Galatea* at Cannons.

The new house opened on the 2nd of April with the *Numitore* of Porta, a Venetian composer. On the 27th of April, Handel's *Radamisto* was produced with a success as great, before an audience as demonstrative, as had attended his *Agrippina* at Venice. The rush for places was overwhelming; ladies, who had literally pushed their way into the theatre, fainted when they got there, from the heat and closeness; while gentlemen, who had offered forty shillings for a gallery-seat, were hopelessly turned away. The fact of the court's being present for the first time may have had something to do with this sensation, but not, as Mainwaring suggests, the fame of Senesino, who did not appear before November, when the whole of *Radamisto* was recast for him and for other new singers. The part of *Radamisto*, originally written for a soprano, was then altered and given to Senesino, a contralto; the part of Zenobia, originally alto, was rewritten for a soprano; the tenor part of Tiridate, for bass.

The work is, as Burney says, "solid, ingenious, and full of fire." "Ombra cara" was regarded by contemporary musicians, and by Handel himself, as one of his very best productions for a single voice. The bass air for Tiridate, "Alzo al volo," has solo parts for two French horns, instruments at that time new in a London opera-band. *Radamisto* was engraved by Meares, as were the extra pieces added when the opera was recast, and which were presented gratis, though they filled forty-one pages, to all who had purchased the opera in its first form. These include an elaborate quartet, "O cedere o perir," the last phrase of which, for bass alone, recalls Polypheme's bold solo-passage at the close of the trio, "The flocks shall leave the mountains," in *Acis and Galatea*.

The first opera-season ended with *Numitore* and the *Narciso* of Domenico Scarlatti. The house reopened on November 19, with the *Astarto* of Bononcini, who

had been invited to compose for the Academy. A man of eminent talent, he had numerous admirers, who ranged themselves in opposition to those of Handel; as much animus as enthusiasm being manifested on both sides. Still, it was not so much by way of putting their respective merits to the test as with a view to popular attraction, that the next new opera, *Muzio Scevola*, was apportioned to three composers; the first act being furnished by Bononcini, the second not, as commonly supposed, by Ariosti, who was still at Bologna, but by Filippo Mattei, known as Pippo or Pipo, a violoncello-player in the orchestra, who about this time gave concerts with Carbonelli, where many of his own compositions were performed, and who in this competition proved unequal to the formidable comparison he had to support. The third act was by Handel, and was universally allowed to be better than Bononcini's. His, too, was the overture, not wholly approved by some pedants on account of an answer, not absolutely strict, to the fugal subject of the allegro movement, where a whole tone is answered by a chromatic semitone. This was pointed out to Geminiani, who admitted the truth of the criticism, with the enthusiastic comment, "Ma quel semitono vale un mondo!" *Muzio Scevola* did not live long, but the feuds between the partisans of the two rival composers ran higher and higher. The supporters of Bononcini maintained that he, at any rate, understood the niceties of the Italian language and the manner of setting it better than the German giant; and they had with them all the English musicians, who swore by the names of Lawes and Purcell, and who were jealous, perhaps, of Handel's rising fame. On the other side, Handel's champions were both numerous and devoted, foremost among them being the royal family, who were staunch, and, on this one point, were agreed. *Muzio Scevola* had been preceded by

several representations of *Radamisto*, with the new cast; it was succeeded by Bononcini's *Ciro;* and the season was concluded by three concerts on the opera stage, at the last of which, for Durastanti's benefit, two new cantatas "by Mr. Handel and Signor Sandoni" were performed. Sandoni, a composer and teacher of some merit, played second harpsichord in the orchestra, and afterwards acquired an unenviable notoriety by his marriage with the celebrated singer, whom Handel called "that she-devil, Cuzzoni!"

The combined efforts of the two popular composers and the excellent company of singers seem, so far, to have failed in making the Academy a paying concern. In July an advertisement was put forth, calling on the subscribers for 4*l.* per cent., and by which it appears that five calls of 5*l.* per cent. had already been made in one season. The next season opened amid prospects not altogether hopeful. The social disquietude occasioned by South Sea bubbles and Jacobite intrigues was unfavourable to art, for, although the demand was universal for distraction, there was little discrimination as to the form in which it came. Handel's *Floridante*, produced in December, though containing some beautiful airs, had only three performances.

Crispo and *Griselda*, by Bononcini, obtained, however, a popularity not undeserved by the undoubted talents of their composer, who, within a limited vein, wrote songs of real beauty, but was lacking in force and variety, and in sustained power. He was powerfully patronized by the whole family of Marlborough, and at the death of the great duke was employed to write his funeral anthem. The duke's eldest daughter, Lady Godolphin, who, on her father's death, succeeded to his title, as Duchess of Marlborough, had fortnightly concerts at her house, conducted by Bononcini, in obtrusive opposition to those which Handel conducted

at the Court of St. James's. Political feeling counted for a great deal in these artistic feuds, which were carried on by the supporters rather than by the principals in the affair.

The season of 1722-3 opened, however, with fifty new subscribers, and the management had secured, for the first time, a *prima donna* of European celebrity. This was Francesca Cuzzoni, who had been a scholar of Lanzi, and was now, at the age of twenty-three, a singer of the first order. Her voice, of exquisite quality and three octaves' extent, and her superb and expressive style, were to some extent counterbalanced by personal uncomeliness and a disposition as ungenial as her temper was violent and uncontrolled. She was to receive a salary of 2000*l.*, with the addition of a premium of 250*l.*, and promised to be in London in time for the beginning of the season, but delayed her coming so long that the Academy directors, uneasy at her non-appearance, sent Sandoni in quest of her. He found her, and, whether captivated by her talent or attracted by her money, he married her on the way back; a bargain which he lived to repent bitterly, although the report which some years later obtained credence, that he had been murdered by his wife, appears to have been without foundation.

This *diva* made her first appearance in Handel's *Ottone* on January 12, 1723. She had had a passage of arms with the composer over the very first rehearsals. She was dissatisfied with her *aria d' entrata*, the lovely and expressive song, "Falsa immagine," thinking it, probably, not showy enough to create a sensation, and refused, in an insolent manner, to sing it. She had, no doubt, been accustomed to dictate her own terms to composers as well as managers, but now she had found more than her match. "Oh! madame," burst forth Handel, "je sais bien que vous êtes une vraie diablesse, mais je vous ferai savoir, moi, que je

suis Béelzebub, le chef des diables." With this he took her up by the waist, swearing, if she made any more words, that he would fling her out of the window. She elected to sing the song, and made with it the most profound effect. For her, too, was written the lovely Siciliana "Affanni del pensier," which caused some eminent contemporary master, not too well affected towards Handel (probably Pepusch), to remark, "That great bear was certainly inspired when he wrote that song." Let any one who imagines that these multitudinous, rapidly-written operas of Handel were slight works of small artistic importance, frameworks for a few fine and more conventional songs,—*pièces de circonstance* written to show off the powers of accomplished singers, examine the simple score of this song, and see, besides the lucid melodiousness of every separate part, the care and perfection in detail, especially the minute colouring of the bass, the phrases given to violoncelli alone, alternated with others for violone (or double-bass), sometimes accentuated by the cembalo or harpsichord and bassoons, all joining at intervals, "tutti, ma piano." The original idea is not more beautiful than the manner in which it is carried out as to these details of effect. The disputed "Falsa immagine" is accompanied by bass only, the rest of the background to the voice being filled in on the harpsichord by the composer. It was immediately followed by an instrumental symphony,—the *vivace* movement of the sixth *Concerto grosso*,—forming a brilliant contrast. *Ottone* is full of beauties. The fine song "Del minacciar del vento" is still a favourite with bass singers. All the airs written for Senesino, are remarkable for their expressive melody. No one owed more to external sources of inspiration than this seemingly self-dependent *great bear*, who rarely reached his highest but when he had a noble subject, or an ideal singer, to rouse his imagination. Perhaps the extreme

beauty of Cuzzoni's songs in this opera is partly due to the fact of Handel's only knowing by hearsay of her powers, and writing her part while not yet disenchanted by her unlovely temperament and manners. He wrote many more songs for her, but none like these. *Flavio,* his next work, suffers from comparison with its predecessor. It had, however, eight representations.

Meanwhile the public taste in entertainments was very low. Even Shakspeare was only tolerated when "arranged" or travestied; the rage was for French farces and burlesques, and the "Devil and Dr. Faustus" drew crowds where "Henry V." failed to attract. The "patriots" uttered virtuous cries over the popular mania for "fiddling and foreigners," to which they chose in great part to ascribe these evils. Gay wrote to Swift, on February 23 :—

"As for the reigning amusement of the town it is entirely music; real fiddles, bass viols, and hautboys; not poetical harps, lyres, and reeds. There's nobody allowed to say, *I sing,* but an eunuch or an Italian woman. Everybody is grown now as great a judge of music, as they were, in your time, of poetry; and folks, that could not distinguish one tune from another, now daily dispute about the different styles of *Handel, Bononcini,* and *Attilio.* People have now forgot *Homer,* and *Virgil,* and *Cæsar;* or, at least, they have lost their ranks. For in London and Westminster, in all polite conversations, *Senesino* is daily voted to be the greatest man that ever lived."

Entertainments of a more doubtful nature had been organized, too, by Heidegger, with the view to replenishing the exchequer of the theatre, in the shape of ridottos or masked balls, the source of endless scandal—mischievous enough to elicit a formal petition from the grand jury of Middlesex for the prosecution of these "nurseries of lewdness, extravagance and immorality," as a "reproach and a scandal to civil government." They were abandoned till the storm had blown over, but carried on again soon after under the simple name of "balls." All contemporary

literature, serious, satirical, and comic, bears testimony to the social condition of which Hogarth's "Mariage à la mode" was an illustration, and the "Hell-fire Club" among people of the highest rank, the discovery of which, in 1721, had drawn forth the royal proclamation against scandalous associations, a symptom.

The opera season of 1723-4 opened with Bononcini's *Farnace*, a failure; followed by Ariosti Attilio's *Vespasiano*, another failure. Signs of displeasure were openly shown, and a "civil broil" arose among the subscribers. The *Giulio Cesare* of Handel, which appeared early in the new year, was probably hurried on, as the original MS. bears marks of haste, and the notes have not, in the simple recitatives, been added above the words, which, according to Handel's invariable custom, were written first.

The cast included Cuzzoni, Durastanti, and Mrs. Anastasia Robinson; Senesino, Berenstadt, and Boschi. Among Handel's operas *Giulio Cesare* is distinguished for its dramatic qualities. Especially remarkable are the three accompanied recitatives, "Dall' ondoso periglio;" "Voi, che mie fide ancelle," and, more than all, "Alma del gran Pompeo," Cæsar's soliloquy over the remains of the murdered Pompey, which, magnificently declaimed by Senesino, made the profoundest impression on the audience. Handel has written other scenes as fine, musically speaking, as this, but few, if any, so suited to the situation, which was singularly consonant to Handel's individual style when in his best mood. Essentially dramatic, this recitative loses much of its force when performed away from the opera.

Dramatic contrast of colour, too, a rarity in those days, was distinctly aimed at in the unusual number and variety of instruments employed to suggest the characteristics, not only of different individuals but of different nationalities. Besides the string quartet

and the two customary cembali, the orchestra includes hautboys, flutes, bassoons, four horns, harp, viol-da-gamba, and theorbo.

The concluding melodious duet, leading to the dignified and equally melodious final chorus, came from the *Farewell to Rome* cantata.

The overture and airs were engraved by Cluer, in 8vo., and published for Handel himself under a patent granted to him in 1720, securing to him the sole right of printing and publishing his own works for a term of fourteen years. This did not have any effect in preventing them from being surreptitiously printed and sold at the music-shops.

After thirteen performances *Giulio Cesare* was succeeded by Bononcini's *Calphurnia*, and *Aquilio*, a pasticcio by several composers, or, according to some writers, written by Attilio alone. But *Giulio Cesare* had practically dissolved the musical triumvirate, and the next year Bononcini was not re-engaged. He remained, however, in London, and was received into the house of the Duchess of Marlborough, who settled on him 500*l.* a year. He seems to have been far more popular among the aristocracy than Handel, who was too independent and too roughly outspoken for them, and the purity of whose private life was, if anything, a source of irritation and dislike towards him among those who were unlike him. Not even his enemies could deny the moral rectitude which his friends knew how to appreciate, and to which a striking testimony is borne in the contemporary poem "The Session of Musicians," written by one of his admirers, in imitation of Suckling's "Session of the Poets," and where Apollo summons a court for the purpose of electing a laureate, but, no poets being forthcoming, has to fall back on musicians, all of whom are weighed in the balances and found wanting—but Handel.

The opera was deprived of some of its attractions by the departure at this time of Durastanti, Robinson, and Berenstadt. Cuzzoni's deficiency in personal attraction and vivacity was sensibly felt in such parts as Cleopatra, and the brilliant reports that reached England of a newly-engaged singer, Faustina Bordoni, caused her arrival to be impatiently looked for by every one excepting Senesino, who was already jealous of the popular favour bestowed on Cuzzoni. This superb singer's insolence, arrogance, and conceit, knew no bounds. Secure in the good graces of the public, who idolized him, he permitted himself to behave in the green-room in a fashion which procured for him a sound caning from old Lord Peterborough, the *fiancé*, if not already the husband, of Anastasia Robinson.

The autumn season was inaugurated by the *Tamerlano* of Handel, a noble work, not often performed at the time, though the songs became rapidly popular. Then came the *Artaserse* of Attilio. Next to that, in January, Handel's *Rodelinda*, which has some of the dramatic quality of *Giulio Cesare*. Senesino's broad, impressive, recitative style had a fine opportunity to display itself in the scene "Pompe vane di morte," ending with the now familiar song "Dove sei, amato bene?" Cuzzoni's songs, especially the pathetic "Ombre piante" and the vehement "Morrai, si," were most effective; her success in the part of Rodelinda was so great, that the costume she wore—of brown silk, embroidered with silver—became "an almost universal fashion for youth and beauty." The opera was published by subscription.

It was succeeded at the theatre by the *Dario* of Attilio, who after this disappeared from the scene where he had become a mere supernumerary. Before his departure, he published, by subscription, a book of chambercantatas of no importance, but containing also a school for playing the viol-d'amore, on which he was a

virtuoso. A reprint of this school might be of practical service.

The celebrated epigram of Byrom, often attributed, but incorrectly, to Swift, first appeared at this time.

> Some say, compar'd to Bononcini,
> That Mynheer Handel's but a ninny;
> Others aver that he to Handel
> Is scarcely fit to hold a candle:
> Strange all this difference should be
> 'Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee.

A letter from Handel to his brother-in-law, Michaelsen, shows how ardently among all this turmoil he wished to see his family. His gratitude for Michaelsen's care of his mother in her old age is most touchingly expressed. But he could not be spared where he was. On the 12th of March appeared his *Scipio*, remarkable for a fine overture and a march that has ever since been widely popular, and which as "Brave boys, prepare" was introduced by Gay into *Polly*, the sequel to the *Beggar's Opera*.

Faustina arrived at last. The negotiations with her had lasted years, and her salary was to be 2500*l.*, a heavy price to pay for the troubles her presence was to bring upon the opera-management. In Italy her fame was such that a medal had been struck in her honour. The violinist Castrucci, when giving a concert in London, five years before, had advertised it by announcing that several songs sung in Venice by Faustina would be included in the programme. Her peculiar forte lay in brilliancy, as Cuzzoni's did in pathos. She had not Cuzzoni's great compass, but the neatness and rapidity of her running divisions, the volubility with which she could reiterate a note, her extraordinary deftness in taking breath, by means of which she seemed able, while increasing and diminishing their volume, to sustain her notes almost endlessly excited rapturous astonishment and applause. She

was pretty and *piquante*, fully conscious of her charms, and able to make the most of them. The powers must indeed have been wonderful that, in spite of so many natural and external disadvantages, enabled the Cuzzoni to hold her own against such a rival.

Of *Alessandro*, in which the two queens of song appeared together for the first time, Colman (in the Opera Register) says that it "drew much." Each was as perfectly suited in her part as if Handel had not known Faustina only by reputation. When they entered together, in the third scene of the first act, to sing a fine dialogued recitative, the excitement was immense. Cuzzoni's style was evidently the more sympathetic to Handel of the two, and the characteristic songs in the opera are for her, Senesino, and Boschi. *Alessandro* ran till the end of the season, but the last performance announced never took place, in consequence of the illness of Senesino, who, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered, declared himself in need of immediate change of air, and went off to the Continent, promising to return in time for the reopening of the house, which, however, he failed to do. During his absence *Camilla* was given at Drury Lane by the English company there.

In this year, 1726, an Act of Parliament was passed for naturalizing George Frederic Handel, at the same time as Louis Sechehaye and others.

Senesino reappeared in Attilio's *Lucio Vero* on the 7th of January, 1727. On the 31st was produced Handel's *Admeto*, which, as a dramatic work, caused a greater sensation than any of its predecessors. The opening scene was new and unconventional. Instead of the customary third movement in the overture, there was presented a "dance of ghosts and larvæ" in the sick-room of Admeto, followed by a sort of scena, half-sung, half-sighed by Admeto from his couch, in which Senesino surpassed himself. Faustina

had not depth or pathos enough for the part of Alcestis, and her songs, though nothing if not brilliant, are not more so than several of Cuzzoni's.

The latter singer had a beautiful shake or "native warble," and ample opportunities were given her of displaying it.

Meanwhile a secondary, impromptu drama was being nightly carried on among the audience by the partisans of the two rival queens. Quanz, the great flautist, who was present, and who in his Memoirs has given a detailed description of Cuzzoni and Faustina, records that, "when the admirers of the one began to applaud, those of the other were sure to hiss," adding, "on which account operas ceased for some time in London." But this was not till a little later.

In February, 1727, the *Flying Post* had the following announcement:—

"The Directors of the Royal Academy of Music are resolved, after the excellent operas composed by Herr Handel, which are now being given, to give one by Signor Attilio Ariosti, and one by Signor Bononcini, that as this theatre can boast of the three best singers in Europe and the best instrumentalists, so the town will also have the pleasure of hearing these three different styles of composition."

The special attraction set forth by this flourish can hardly be called new. The promise was only kept in part, for *Admeto* had an unprecedented run, and only after nineteen consecutive performances gave way to *Astyanax*, the last opera produced for England by Bononcini. On the night of its final performance the quarrels between Cuzzoni and Faustina came to a climax. According to the *London Journal*, the partisans, not content with hissing on one side and clapping on the other, "proceeded to the melodious use of cat-calls and other accompaniments which manifested the zeal and politeness of the illustrious

assembly." The Princess of Wales was there, "but neither her Royal Highness's presence nor the laws of decorum could restrain the ardour of the combatants."

This brought the season abruptly to a close. The epigrams, the squibs, the lampoons aimed at the opera, were legion. Colley Cibber, manager of Drury Lane, produced, amid loud applause, a farce called "The Contretemps; or, the Rival Queens," in which these lyric heroines were represented as flying at each other on the stage and tearing each other's hair. Dr. Arbuthnot published a "manifesto," entitled "The Devil to pay at St. James's; or, a full and true account of a most horrid and bloody battle between Madame F—— and Madame C——. Moreover, how Senesino has taken snuff, is going to leave the opera, and sing Psalms at Henley's Oratory."

After the death of George I., Handel was commissioned to compose the anthem for the coronation of George II. in Westminster Abbey. He wrote four, for seven, five, six, and five voices respectively. They were: (1) *Zadok the priest,* (2) *Let thy hand be strengthened,* (3) *The king shall rejoice,* (4) *My heart is inditing,* and were all performed on the occasion. The first has become the *Coronation* Anthem *par excellence,* and is nearly as familiar to English people as the National Anthem. All are fine in their simplicity and broad effect. It is said that Handel took great offence, when words for these anthems were sent him by the Bishop of London, at his implied ignorance of the Scriptures, declaring, "I have read my Bible very well, and shall choose for myself." The performance in the Abbey was on a grand scale, the whole opera-orchestra assisting. Handel had a double bassoon constructed expressly for this occasion. It was to have been played by Lampe (author of the "Dragon of Wantley)," but, owing to some defect,

the instrument could not be used, and lay by till the Handel Commemoration of 1784.

Cuzzoni and Faustina made peace with each other sufficiently to sing together in *Ricardo Primo* and *Siroe* during the season of 1727-8. *Siroe* had nineteen representations, but its success was affected by the appearance, in another quarter, of a powerful counter-attraction which speedily drained the Italian opera of its audience. It was the last of Handel's operas printed by Cluer. *Tolomeo, Re d' Egitto,* was produced, in spite of thin houses, on April 30. An echo-song for Cuzzoni made a great effect, many of the passages being repeated behind the scenes by Senesino, by which his recognition in the drama was brought about. It was now Faustina's turn to fall ill. Before the season was over she went off to Venice, where she married the composer, Hasse. The whole company dispersed over the Continent.

Causes were now at work which undermined and finally ruined the Italian opera.

CHAPTER VII.

HANDEL MANAGER OF THE ITALIAN OPERA.

It is said that Swift once remarked to Gay, on the subject of dramas, that "a Newgate pastoral might make an odd, pretty kind of thing." The idea, whether thus suggested or not, was fruitful. It was not necessary to go far to find a Newgate pastoral in those days of lawlessness and violence. Embittered by long years of waiting about court, in the hope—always deferred—of favours which never came, smarting with neglect, resentment, and wounded pride, Gay wrote the *Beggar's Opera*, produced by Rich at Lincoln's Inn Fields on January 29, 1728, which, in the slight disguise of a story professing to expose the malpractices of thieves, highwaymen, and receivers of stolen goods, and to depict the lowest forms of vice and crime, was, in truth, a venomous satire on the court, the first minister, and the fashionable life of the day, an apotheosis of triumphant profligacy and universal corruption, conveyed in the form of the most fashionable of all entertainments, the opera. It was a picture all could understand, and that every one recognized; it was in English; it was powerful, for it was true; and those who were hardest hit by its stinging missiles found it best to put a bold face on the matter, and enjoy the spectacle with the rest. Swift, alluding some time later to a philippic delivered against it by the Archbishop of Canterbury, affirmed

that the piece was calculated to effect more good than a hundred such sermons, declaring that the characters, far from being overdrawn, were literally true to every-day life, and that the author had rendered essential service to the cause of religion and morals.

This was not without truth, but the stage-representation of so revolting a story was quite as well calculated to flatter a prurient taste as to convey any moral soever, as indeed is pretty well shown by the repeated revivals of the *Beggar's Opera*, long after the scandals which it illustrated and attacked have been things of the past.

The best testimony to its justice was afforded by its tremendous success. No need here of guarantors; no calls for five per cent. It had, at its first run, sixty-three representations, insomuch that it was said to have "made Gay rich, and Rich gay."

Musically, the piece consisted of ballads, mostly English and Scotch; some of them very old and beautiful airs, which no doubt have immensely contributed to the popularity of the piece. They were selected and arranged by Dr. Pepusch, who also wrote an overture. He also introduced the march in *Rinaldo*, to the words "Let us take the road." The dialogue is spoken. From its general onslaught on existing fashionable life, the Italian opera could not, and did not escape. But it was not, as has sometimes been stated, a satire directed specially against opera. Practically, however, it became one, for the whole town now trooped to this new excitement, as a few months before they had trooped to hear *Giulio Cesare* and *Alessandro;* and the same people who showed their appreciation of Handel's music by an accompaniment of hisses and cat-calls for the benefit of Cuzzoni or Faustina, now flocked to applaud Lavinia Fenton as Polly. All former crazes of the kind were thrown into the shade by this. A letter of the shrewd Dr.

Arbuthnot to the *London Journal* puts the case in its plainest light. After expressing astonishment at the fickleness of the public which had proved by its behaviour that its fondness for Italian opera proceeded, not from a true taste for good music, but from a violent affectation of it, he proceeds,—

> The *Beggar's Opera* I take to be a touchstone to try British taste on; and it has accordingly proved effectual in discovering our true inclinations, which how artfully soever they may have been disguised for a while, will one time or other start up and disclose themselves. . . . . .
>
> For my own part I cannot think it would be any loss to real lovers of Music if all those false friends who have made pretension to it only in compliance with the fashion would separate themselves from them, provided our Italian opera could be brought under such regulations as to go on without them.

The *Beggar's Opera* had several imitators, the most successful of which was *Hurlothrumbo, or, the Supernatural,* a spectacular piece by Samuel Johnson of Cheshire, who composed the music and played the chief part, and to which an epilogue was contributed by the unmusical Byrom, who was delighted with the piece, writing of it—

> For my part, who consider all stage entertainments stuff and nonsense, I consider this as a joke upon 'em all.

Meanwhile, the last Italian operas had been played to empty houses. The subscribers were lukewarm, and dilatory in paying their dues, while the whole original fund of 50,000*l.* had long been spent, and the calls for five per cent. were incessant.

The *Daily Courant* of December 2nd contains the advertisement of a court to be held, at which were to be chosen a deputy-governor and directors for the ensuing year. But it does not appear that this met with any response, and the Royal Academy collapsed from inanition.

Handel now entered into a three-years' partnership

with Heidegger; a step which must have cost him an effort. The association of this unscrupulous adventurer with a man of Handel's integrity, honour, and intellect, cannot be realized without surprise and regret. Its consequence was the coupling of their names in such lines as—

> Since masquerades and operas made their entry,
> And Heydegger and Handel ruled our gentry.

But Handel's heart was in the opera, and he struggled to the last before he relinquished it. Singers had now to be found for the new undertaking, and in the autumn of 1728 he departed on a second journey to Italy, accompanied this time by his aged friend Steffani. Together, they visited many old Italian acquaintances; Cardinal Ottoboni among the number. Handel had a friend at Florence in Francis Colman, the English Envoy; and at Venice in the banker, Joseph Smith, who had married the English singer, Mrs. Tofts, and who facilitated Handel's correspondence with his home. His mother at this time suffered a stroke of paralysis, and though she partly recovered from it, she became quite blind. Her son visited her in June, on his way back to England; it was their last meeting, as she died the next year.

The singers engaged by Handel were Bernacchi, a renowned sopranist, who, however, had seen his best days; Signora Anna Strada, an excellent soprano, who, of all the singers Handel ever had seems to have pleased him most; Signore Merighi and Bertolli, both contraltos; Pio Fabri, the tenor; and the German bass, Gottfried Reimschneider. He was in England by the end of June, 1729, but the theatre did not open till the 2nd of December, when *Lotario* was produced. This opera is not pre-eminent among its companions for any special qualities. The score was only finished on the 16th of November, so that it was copied, learned, rehearsed, and mounted in a

fortnight. Strada's songs were more calculated to display her voice and her beautiful shake than to appeal to any deep emotions. This singer had to contend for some time against a good deal of prejudice, for the memory was yet fresh of Cuzzoni and Faustina, while her personal appearance was so little in her favour that she was commonly called *the Pig*. Handel perceived her singular merit, and took the greatest pains in composing for her and instructing her; while she was so apt and willing a pupil that, from a coarse singer with a fine voice, she became the equal of any performer in Europe, and "sung herself," as Burney says, "into favour."

Partenope appeared on the 24th of February. In this opera the so-called "chorus" appears four times, and there are four "sinfonie," or short instrumental interludes. A fine air for soprano, "Ma quai noti di mesti lamenti," is beautifully and fancifully scored for two flutes, two violins and viola *con sordini*, and bass played by theorbo and other strings *pizzicato*, "senza cembalo e bassoni."

There were seven performances, but it was evident that to draw the public, a well-known "star"-singer must be secured. After some negotiations Senesino was recaptured, and engaged at a salary of 1400 guineas. *Scipio* was revived for him. *Poro* appeared in January, 1731. The book is Metastasio's "Alessandro nelle Indie," set almost at the same time by Handel, Vinci, and Hasse; at a later date by many other composers. Handel's work contains some fine duets, and a bravura song, "Serbati, a grande imprese," for Fabri, the tenor, of extraordinary difficulty. The opera was several times revived in the next few years, and the fourth edition contains three interpolated airs, by other composers. Before the end of 1731, arrived the great bass singer Antonio Montagnana, for whom Handel wrote some noble songs.

Ezio, produced on the 15th of January, 1732, contains "Nasce al bosco," which remains a favourite show-piece with basses or barytones whose compass is extensive. In the pasticcio oratorio *Redemption*, put together by Arnold, after Handel's death, out of his various works, this song appears as, "He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters." *Ezio* had but five representations; it was followed by *Sosarme*, which had ten. This opera contains the most beautiful song "Rendi 'l sereno al ciglio," also popularized in England as "Lord, remember David."

Orlando, first played on the 27th of January, 1733, belongs to the number of Handel's operas which may be called representative works, and which include *Ottone*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Admeto*. The part of Zoroaster, written for Montagnana, is so fine that it must have been displeasing to Senesino, who was beginning to make himself more obnoxious than ever. He too had, however one great scene at the end of the second act, which is in several movements, and, although for a single voice, is an approach to the modern finale. To one exquisite little song, "Già l' ebro mio ciglio," Handel wrote an accompaniment for two *violette marine*. This was played by the brothers Castrucci, who had recently introduced the instrument, a little viola, into England. *Orlando* was performed sixteen times, and printed soon after. None of these later operas were published by subscription, nor were any of them dedicated to noble *dilettanti*.

It had, however, become quite evident that one effect of the success of the *Beggar's Opera* was to revive the desire for some English entertainment in music, something which should be of native growth, and not a foreign luxury, yet of a different kind to the ballad-operas, and better than they. The subject was discussed in newspapers and pamphlets; reasons and remedies were suggested for the decline of English

taste and English art; theories without end were advanced, as if any amount of theorizing would produce a work of imagination. Most writers confidently asserted that a good libretto was the one thing wanting to elicit the desired article. Arne and Carey each tried his hand on Addison's "Rosamond," but without success. It did not occur to the philosophic speculators that there already existed among them works containing the seeds of what they wanted, not indeed of an English opera, but of a form of musical art even more consonant with the character of the nation at large, and more suited to its stage of art-development than the operatic. The two works composed by Handel at Cannons, *Acis and Galatea*, and *Esther*, combined simplicity of outline with a breadth and variety of structure hitherto reserved for church-music; they were English pieces nobly set, and they were not ill-adapted to the stage. The idea seems to have struck several people before it occurred to Handel himself. *Acis* was taken up and performed by two theatrical companies, not Handel's. Rich gave it at Lincoln's Inn Fields—on the very scene of the *Beggar's Opera*—for the benefit of Rochetti, a singer. It was a most incomplete performance, probably including nothing but the songs, which had in MS. become widely known, and of which an unauthorized edition had been printed by Walsh in 1722. But at the new little English theatre in the Haymarket, just opposite the King's Theatre, it was performed under the auspices of old Arne, father of the Doctor, with English singers, and almost in its integrity, only divided into three acts. The singers were Miss Arne (afterwards Mrs. Cibber), Mountier, and Waltz, who made his first appearance in the character of "Polyphemus."

Handel seems to have thought it best to follow suit. But he was obliged to employ the Italian singers at his disposal, without whom he could certainly not have

counted on his audience. The *Acis* which he gave on June 10, 1732, was a curious medley, made up of the Cannons masque, and of the old Neapolitan cantata *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, extended to operatic length; the parts were sung in their respective languages by seven Italian and two English singers, with scenery and dresses, but without action. It contained a fine eight-part chorus, "Viver e non amar," a portion of which is identical with "Wretched lovers," the chorus in the English *Acis*. How Handel could have tolerated this mixture, when his real work was being performed according to his own intentions just across the street, is hard to understand. It was, however, given four times, and frequently repeated up to December, 1732, when he ventured on presenting it in its original form, with an organ concerto between the parts, and an additional chorus, "Happy we."

In 1732 *Esther* was also unearthed and performed by Bernard Gates, master of the children of the Chapel Royal; at first privately, but shortly afterwards in public, at the hall in York Buildings, Villars Street. This was advertised for the 20th of April. One day, before the performance, Handel in his turn announced, in the *Daily Journal*.

By His Majesty's command.

At the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, on Thursday, the 2nd of May, will be performed the sacred story of *Esther;* an oratorio in English, formerly composed by Mr. Handel, and now revised by him, with several additions, and to be performed by a great number of voices and instruments. N.B. There will be no acting on the stage, but the house will be fitted up in a decent manner for the audience. The music to be disposed after the manner of the Coronation Service. Tickets to be delivered at the same price.

The singers were Strada, Senesino, Bertolli, and Montagnana, who all sang their parts in English.

The success this time was unexpectedly great. "Hester, Oratorio or sacred drama, in English," says

Colman; "all the opera-singers placed in a kind of gallery; no action; was six times performed, and was very full." The whole royal family was present. Those of the crowd who could not gain admittance received their money back in full, or a ticket for a future representation. The words for the additional pieces were by Humphreys, who has therefore been credited with the whole, though on no good grounds. The original words were ascribed to Pope, and he did not deny, if he did not claim the authorship. A book of the words, printed at Dublin in 1757, attributes them to Arbuthnot. Chrysander's opinion is that these two writers collaborated. The success of these English works called forth a letter from Aaron Hill to Handel, exhorting him, after having made these considerable steps, to turn his inimitable genius towards "the establishment of music upon a foundation of good poetry; where the excellence of the sound should be no longer dishonoured by the poorness of the sense it is chained to." He puts in a strong plea for the English language and English singers, and calls on Handel to deliver England from its Italian bondage, in the certainty that, "a species of dramatic opera might be invented, that, by reconciling reason and dignity with music and fine machinery, would charm the ear, and hold fast the heart, together." The first half of this scheme was to be nobly carried out by Handel. The last part has been reserved for our own day.

Handel's idea in 1732 seems to have been the substitution of these stage-performances of large choral and orchestral works, diversified by songs, and illustrating as well as relating some sort of story, for the *solo-operas* of the Italian school. His next piece of this kind was *Deborah*, an oratorio; the text by Humphreys, adapted from a French drama, performed on March 17, 1733, at the theatre, after the same

manner as *Esther*. Several numbers were adopted from the *Passion* (Brockes) and the *Coronation Anthems*. It is written for a double chorus and a large orchestra, and its production was probably an expensive affair. Handel and Heidegger, of whom he was not yet independent, agreed, perhaps somewhat arbitrarily, to treat the first performance as an extra night, at prices somewhat higher than usual. This gave rise to a perfect storm of displeasure and discontent among the subscribers, who did not see why they should pay more for this kind of entertainment than for an opera. Coinciding, as this circumstance did, with the furious popular opposition to the Excise Bill, just introduced by Walpole, party and political excitement mingled once more with these personal causes of dissatisfaction, and Handel who had seen his operas coupled in scornful rhymes with Heidegger's ridottos, now found himself freely compared to the first minister. It was a signal for the upstarting of all the enmity, jealousy, and spite, which lurked around him although not daring to show itself. A furious attack on him by the librettist Paolo Rolli appeared in a letter to the *Craftsman*, teeming with coarse personal abuse and malicious misstatement of facts, openly and boastfully alluding to the efforts of several fashionable ladies to defeat Handel's plans and thin his audiences by giving assemblies and entertainments on his performance-nights, and winding up with the following epigram, professedly a quotation :—

Quoth W——e to H——l, "Shall we two agree,
And *Excise* the whole nation?"
H——. "Si, Caro, si.
Of what use are *sheep*, if the shepherd can't shear 'em?
At the Haymarket I, you at Westminster?"
W——. "Hear him!"

Call'd to order, their *Seconds* appear in their place;
One famed for his *morals*, and one for his *face!*

Tho' at first they bid fair, at last they were crost;
The *Excise* was thrown up, and *Deborah* lost

Handel may himself have felt doubtful of the justice of his last move, for he hastened to give another subscription-performance of *Deborah*. But neither its nineteen choruses, some of them very fine, nor the constant presence and support of the royal family could make this oratorio a success. It is too entirely wanting in personal interest for a work with any pretensions to being dramatic, and the parts of Deborah and Barak, unavoidably set for soprano and contralto (Strada and Senesino) had not contrast enough to give them even the requisite musical individuality.

Curiously enough, it was now, while all this enmity surrounded him, that his old rival, Bononcini, had to quit England under a cloud. He had been living all this time under the mighty Marlborough patronage, and, we may be sure, losing no opportunity of adding to the unpopularity of the more successful German composer whom he had hated for so long. In 1728 he presented as his own to the Academy of Ancient Music a madrigal entitled *La Vita Caduca*, which passed for three years as his composition, but was then found, words and notes, in a book of Lotti's *Duetti, Terzetti e Madrigali*, presented to the Academy by one of its members. Bononcini indignantly claimed the authorship, saying that Lotti must have copied it from him. This led to a correspondence between the Academy and the old Venetian composer, in the course of which it was proved beyond the possibility of question that the madrigal was Lotti's. Bononcini kept a sullen silence, and for a time absented himself. After some months, however, he returned, anxious to produce his *Polifemo* at the opera. That this was performed was thanks to Handel, for the majority of the orchestra, many of them Bononcini's countrymen, at first

refused their services. The singers did the same, and the husband of Strada, one Signor Aurelio del Pò, published a sort of bombastic manifesto to the effect that he would not allow his wife to sing in the works of Handel's enemies. A performance was, eventually, brought about, under royal patronage. But it fell to the ground. Not long after, Bononcini left England in the company of a Count Ughi, addicted to alchemy, with whom he went in search of the philosopher's stone. He had at last to fall back on music for a subsistence, and composed some more large works before he finally died at Venice, in poverty and obscurity, at ninety years of age.

Handel's *Athaliah* was written by request, for performance at the Oxford Act of 1733. It had been intended to confer on him the degree of Doctor of Music, a distinction he resolutely and pertinaciously refused. When, eight years later, he went to Dublin and was announced in the papers as *Doctor Handel*, he never rested till he got it altered, and *Mr.* substituted in its place.

Mr. Schœlcher, in his "Life of Handel," gives some very edifying and amusing extracts from the "Diary of Thomas Hearne," a member of St. Edmund's Hall, and from contemporary pamphlets, affording us a glimpse of the picture from the university point of view, and an idea of the kind of audience before whom Handel, "and his lowsy crew, a great number of foreign fidlers," and of "squeeking, bawling, outlandish singsters," "shew'd away with his *Esther*, an oratorio or sacred drama," on the 5th of July. *Athaliah* was produced on the 10th. This oratorio had been written with two prominent bass parts, for Waltz and for Montagnana, who, however, broke his engagement and went off before the performance. His part had to be transposed for alto, to the serious detriment of the whole. The work was several times sung in London,

but Handel used a large part of it afterwards for his serenata *Parnasso in Festa*. The other Oxford performance included the *Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate*, and *Deborah*. All took place in the theatre, where the composer also opened the organ "in such a manner as astonished every hearer." Michael Christian Festing and Dr. Arne, who were present, told Dr. Burney that "neither themselves nor any one else of their acquaintance had ever before heard such extempore, or such premeditated playing."

Montagnana's desertion was connected with a quarrel of Handel and Senesino which broke up the company, and which had culminated during the month that preceded the Oxford Act. A consummate singer and actor, but arrogant, supercilious, and outrageously conceited, Senesino was confirmed in all his insolence by the extravagant folly of his admirers. His discontent with a composer who would be obeyed increased when this composer wrote operas of which the interest did not centre in his part, and Senesino's airs in Handel's later operas are not equal to those which preceded them; it is easy to see that they are not inspired by admiration or sympathy. Still less, now, did he like having to sing his airs in English, in works where the interest centred in no individual at all, but in the chorus. He took advantage of Handel's present unpopularity to show his feelings very plainly, and received his dismissal at once. He was, no doubt encouraged to act as he did by Handel's enemies, who aimed at undermining the object of their hatred by establishing a rival opera-house in Lincoln's Inn Fields. All their plans were laid, and were declared immediately after the final rupture. Senesino, as well as Cuzzoni, was engaged for this new undertaking, which had, for the time, the support of Frederick, Prince of Wales, who, though he had the good taste in music which certainly distinguished the House of

Hanover, and returned afterwards to his Handelian allegiance, took the part he did out of opposition to his parents, with whom he was at bitter enmity. Porpora and Hasse were invited to come as composers, while Heidegger, who hated oratorios, was probably only prevented from breaking his contract with Handel by fear of court displeasure.

Angry at the loss of Senesino, many of Handel's supporters deserted to the hostile camp, and joined in the general cry against his insolence and obstinacy.

As soon as the Oxford performances were over, Handel, undaunted, accompanied by the elder Smith, went abroad again in quest of singers, and re-engaged his old *prima donna* Durastanti. He had opportunities of hearing and comparing two renowned sopranists, Farinelli and Carestini, and gave the preference to Carestini. As a matter of diplomacy, this must have been a mistake, though it is not difficult to account for from an artistic point of view. Farinelli was the incarnation of the class of star-virtuosi; one of those gems which may be enhanced by an appropriate setting, but beside which no other gem can shine. The one requisite in music written for such singers was that it should be a vehicle for their varied accomplishments; any intrinsic worth in the composition was superfluous. And Handel's experience of Cuzzoni, Faustina, and Senesino, may well have caused him to hesitate before risking himself in the power of too absolute and too imperious a "first subject."

Carestini's voice was a splendid counter-tenor, and his abilities such that Hasse and many other eminent professors were of opinion that not to have heard him was to be unacquainted with the most perfect style of singing. He had great enthusiasm and imagination, was "tall, beautiful and majestic" in person, animated and intelligent as an actor.

Of Handel's former singers only Strada remained

faithful to him. His appreciation of Carestini is shown in several fine songs written for him, but from this time his operas, though never without beautiful numbers, contain nothing which adds to his history or illustrates his art-progress. His theatre opened with operas and pasticcios of Italian composers. Then came his *Arianna*, which had sixteen performances, and to which the rival house opposed the *Arianna* of Porpora, supported by Farinelli. Each company injured the other, and both served as a butt for the merriment of lampoonists. At this juncture, the witty Arbuthnot struck a last blow for his friend with the satire "Harmony in an Uproar: a letter to Frederick Handel, Esq., Master of the Opera House in the Haymarket, from Hurlothrumbo Johnson, Esq., Composer Extraordinary to all the Theatres in Great Britain, excepting that of the Hay-Market. In which the Rights and Merits of both O——s are properly considered."

To quote this pungent pamphlet at any length, would be incompatible with the limits of the present volume, while it is impossible to represent it fairly by extracts; a few of these, however, must be given, if only to show how history in these matters repeats itself, seemingly to prove that, as *Vivian Grey* says, "Time is nothing."

After an exordium, which runs as follows:—

> You must know then, Sir, that I have been told, and made to understand by your Betters, Sir, that of late you have been d——d *Insolent*, *Audacious*, *Impudent*, and *Saucy*, and a thousand Things else, Sir, (that don't become you) worse than all that—
>
> Do you see, Sir—as to Particulars, we scorn to descend to Particulars;—for they are looked upon as great Secrets—

the writer proceeds to arraign Handel before a judge and jury, when all who have complaints against the

prisoner are summoned to prefer them, in order that he may be brought to speedy justice.

Court. Frederick Handel, Hold up your Hand. Know, you are here brought to answer to the several following high Crimes and Misdemeanors committed upon the Wills and Undertakings, and against the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the Mobility of Great Britain, particularly this Metropolis, to which you shall make true and faithful Answer. . . .

Imprimis. You are charged with having bewitched us for the Space of twenty years past; nor do we know where your Inchantments will end, if a timely Stop is not put to them; they threatening us with an entire Destruction of Liberty, and an absolute Tyranny in your Person over the whole Territories of the *Hay-Market.*

Secondly. You have most insolently dared to give us good Musick and sound Harmony, when we wanted and desired bad; to the great Encouragement of your Operas, and the Ruin of our good Allies and Confederates, the Professors of bad Musick.

Thirdly. You have most feloniously and arrogantly assumed to yourself an uncontrolled Property of pleasing us, whether we would or no; and have often been so bold as to charm us, when we were positively resolved to be out of Humour.

Besides this, we can, at convenient Time or Times, produce and prove Five hundred and fifteen Articles of lesser Consequence, which may in the Whole, at least, amount to accumulative Treason.—How say you, Sir, are you guilty of the said Charge or no?"

Prisoner. Guilty of the whole charge.

After some more such reasoning, during which the prisoner attempts a defence, cut short by the court, Hurlothrumbo in his own person thus addresses him:

"Now Sir, you may think this Usage very severe—But to show you upon what a weak foundation you build your Pretences to support an Opera, I'll prove by twenty-five substantial Reasons, that you are no Composer, nor know no more of Musick than you do of Algebra. . . .

First, then, Sir—Have you taken your Degrees? Boh! ha, ha, ha! Are you a Doctor, Sir? ha, ha! A fine Composer indeed, and not a Graduate; fie, fie, you might as well pretend to be a judge without ever having been called to the bar; or pretend to be a Bishop, and not a Christian. . . .

Secondly, Sir,—I understand you have never read Euclid, are

a declared Foe to all the proper Modes, and Forms, and Tones of Musick, and scorn to be subservient to, or tied up by Rules, or have your Genius cramped. Thou *Goth* and *Vandal* to just Sounds! we may as well place Nightingales and Canary-birds behind the Scenes and take the wild Operas of Nature from them, as allow you to be a Composer: An ingenious Carpenter, with a Rule and Compass, will succeed better in Composition, thou finished Irregularity. . . .

* * * * * * *

But as for my Fifth Reason, Sir—That, indeed, would be sufficient to convince the most Bigotted in your Favour of your Incapacity in this Art; nor will it scarcely be believed, when I can demonstrate to the blind Understandings of your Admirers, that, by G—d, you have made such Musick, as never Man did before you, nor, I believe, never will be thought of again, when you're gone.

The illustrious criminal sustained a heavy loss when his kind-hearted, sharp-witted friend and supporter died, which happened only a few months after this, in 1735. Meanwhile, he worked quietly on. The betrothal of his friend and favourite pupil, the Princess Anne, with the Prince of Orange, occasioned the production of a serenata, *Parnasso in Festa*, in great part adapted from *Athaliah;* and also of a *Wedding Anthem*, put together out of other works. At the opera, *Pastor Fido* was revived, with alterations and additions; and with this ended at once the season and Handel's partnership with Heidegger. The rival company took immediate possession of the Haymarket Theatre; and Handel, as if he had not yet had enough of theatrical management, went into partnership with John Rich, occupying the Lincoln's Inn house for one month, and migrating thence to Covent Garden, where he opened in November, 1734, with *Pastor Fido*, preceded by an entertainment, half ballet, half masque, called *Terpsichore*, arranged for a French *danseuse*, Mdlle. Sallé. *Ariodante* and *Alcina* followed; giving satisfaction to a small number of faithful admirers. The latter opera caused a passing disagreement between

Handel and Carestini, who objected to his beautiful but simple aria, "Verdi prati," behaving very much as Cuzzoni had done on a former occasion, and meeting with very similar treatment at the hands of the master, who now, as before, proved to be right, even from the singer's point of view, for "Verdi prati" was never sung without being encored.

Fourteen oratorio performances were given during Lent, on Wednesdays and Fridays, when the Haymarket house was closed. On these occasions it was Handel's custom to play organ concertos between the acts. But nothing served any longer to attract the public, all wild after Farinelli. The king and the whole royal family remained Handel's constant supporters, and their regular attendance at the otherwise deserted oratorios caused Lord Chesterfield to say, by way of explaining his exit at the beginning of one of them, that he felt it best to leave, "lest he should disturb the king in his privacies."

Handel had lost 9000*l.* in two years, and was almost at the end of his resources. The Haymarket Theatre, as royal theatre *par excellence,* had claimed the king's subscription of 1000*l.* which Handel had formerly enjoyed, and though, after the production of *Ariodante,* an extra subsidy of 500*l.* was granted to him, it was insufficient to repair his shattered fortunes.

Carestini, dissatisfied with his position and the greater popularity of Farinelli, now left the country. During 1736 and 1737 Handel only produced, in opera, *Atalanta, Giustinio,* and *Arminio:* his more serious energies, not yet exhausted, were turned into another channel.

Discouraged and embittered as he must have been, in failing health, as too soon appeared, he showed a splendid superiority to the might of circumstance by the production, in February, 1736, of *Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music,* Dryden's great "Ode in celebra-

tion of St. Cecilia's Day;" the text arranged, set in order, and divided into recitatives, airs, and choruses, by Newburgh Hamilton. This work is too well known in the present day to need comment. In its freshness and life it recalls *Acis and Galatea;* in force and dignity it is, by virtue of its theme, superior. The gorgeousness and variety of the successive scenes and emotions it represents may well indeed have vindicated the cause that, though Love was crowned, was by Music won. When Handel appears as the bard of heroes and the singer of poetry, then, and then only, is he Handel. Mighty, but not versatile, he could indeed set to music, and to good music, the sham pageantry of theatrical kings, and the billing and cooing of stage-lovers, but, unlike Anacreon, whose "lyre would sing of nought but love," he owed his true utterance to heroic deeds, prophetic inspirations, the struggles and the victories of nations.

Alexander's Feast was five times performed; it is said, with great success. Handel composed at the same time, probably for the English tenor Beard, a short additional piece on the same subject for a single voice, to poetry by Newburgh Hamilton, afterwards replaced by Italian words. It was sung between the acts of Dryden's *Ode,* but afterwards was omitted, and the *Choice of Hercules* given as a third part. Dryden's poem concludes at the chorus "Let old Timotheus yield the prize." Handel used to let this be followed by a "Concert for Organ and other Instruments," and then by an "appendix;" the words provided by Hamilton.

In 1739 Handel set to music Dryden's smaller *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.* This was, then, given on the same evenings with *Alexander's Feast,* as well as "two concertos for various instruments and an organ concerto." It afterwards was coupled, in performances, with *Acis and Galatea.*

To these years of superhuman labour against over-

whelming odds belong a number of Handel's most important compositions for solo instruments and for orchestra. Between 1732 and 1740 he published his twelve *Solo Sonatas, with bass, for Violin or German Flute,* two sets of *Trio Sonatas,* the so-called *Hautboy Concertos,* the twelve *Concerti Grossi,* or suites for strings; another set of five *Orchestra Concertos,* the first two sets of *Organ Concertos,* and the second, third, and fourth collections of *Suites de Pièces pour le Clavecin,* thus fulfilling the promise made in his announcement, prefixed to the first edition, published in 1720 :—

I have been obliged to publish Some of the following lessons because Surrepticious and incorrect copies had got abroad. I have added several new ones to make the Work more usefull which if it meets with a favourable reception: I will Still proceed to publish more reckoning it my duty with my Small talent to Serve a Nation from which I have received so generous a protection.

He had served it with all his strength for seventeen years since those words were written. Small wonder that now he completely collapsed. His extraordinary exertions, his anxieties, his losses, his quarrels, his stoical resistance to inimical attacks—all combined to produce their full effect. "His fortune," says Mainwaring, "was not more impaired than his health or his understanding. His right arm was become useless to him from a stroke of the palsy; and how greatly his senses were disordered at intervals, for a long time, appeared from a hundred instances which are better forgotten than recorded." His natural irritability, aggravated by perpetual friction of worry and warfare, increased almost to madness; yet at other times it was hard to rouse him to any exertion, and he had to be managed like a child. But his iron constitution held good. He went to Aix-la-Chapelle, and after such vigorous use of the vapour-baths as would have killed any ordinary mortal, he completely re-

covered. His astonishing cure, combined with his extraordinary organ-playing, made, it is said, a great impression on the nuns of the convent there, who thought that a miracle had been worked in his behalf.

When he returned to London in November, Heidegger the irrepressible had actually reopened the Haymarket with the fragments of former operatic shipwrecks, and at once requested Handel to write something for him, offering 1000*l.* for two operas. Handel complied, and began *Faramondo*, but its composition was interrupted by that of the *Funeral Anthem*, written on the death of his patroness, Queen Caroline. No work of Handel's most prosperous times surpasses this beautiful and profoundly pathetic elegy—this dirge, for chorus and quartet of solo-voices. It is indeed a noble monument, almost approaching an oratorio in its scale, and the worthy expression of a nation's sorrow. It was afterwards used by the composer as the introduction to *Israel in Egypt*, but it overweighted the work, and was withdrawn. It has been in Germany turned into an oratorio, and entitled *Emotions* (Empfindungen) *at the grave of Jesus; an oratorio by G. F. Händel*—a travesty of the composer's intention and meaning which is nothing short of sacrilegious.

Handel's last operas, written between 1738 and 1740, are *Faramondo*, *Alessandro Severo* (a pasticcio), *Jupiter in Argos*, no complete score of which exists; *Imeneo*, and *Deidamia*. His affairs were still in a ruinous condition, and he was not able to pay his singers, who, however, knowing his integrity, were all satisfied with his promise to do so when he was able, with the single exception of Del Pò, the husband of Strada, who had made so ostentatious a profession of loyalty to him before, and who now threatened to arrest him for debt.

Meanwhile the Farinelli fever had raged itself out; Farinelli, in his turn, had sung to empty houses, and had quitted England in disgust. The rival opera collapsed with his departure, in 1737, having lost 12,000*l.* during its brief career.

On March 28, 1738, Handel, yielding to the representations of many friends, gave a benefit, in the hope of somewhat amending his circumstances. It was announced as "An Oratorio," but consisted in fact of a series of songs with the addition of an organ concerto, and brought him 800*l.* A month later a statue was erected to him in Vauxhall Gardens, by Jonathan Tyers, the proprietor, who, "in consideration of the real merit of that inimitable master, thought it proper that his effigies should preside there, where his harmony had so often charmed even the greatest crowds into the profoundest calm and most decent behaviour."

Perhaps this testimony to the hold he had obtained on the national heart, below the crust of fashion, may have done more to recall him to his loftiest aims, to soften his wounded contempt, and soothe his irritability of nerve, than even the vapour-baths of Aix, or the guineas from his benefit-concert.

Heidegger's enterprise had dropped, and from 1740 Handel had no more to do with the opera. But the last great phase of his life overlapped the one which preceded it, and a year before *Deidamia* was performed had appeared the oratorio of *Saul*.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ORATORIOS.

The Haymarket Opera-house, the scene of so much past strife, was now unoccupied; and in January, 1739, Handel took it for oratorio performances, with the intention of giving twelve of these yearly, beginning at the rate of one a week. Between July 23 and October 11, 1738, he had composed the oratorios of *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt; Saul* taking two months and three days; *Israel* being entirely written between the 1st and 28th of October. The serenata of *Imeneo*, begun at the same time, was not finished till two years afterwards. *Saul*, first produced on January 16, 1739, had five performances, "with organ concertos between the acts." It does not seem to have found much favour with the public, although, besides its splendid choruses, it contained one number destined more than any other to sway the emotions of multitudes, the unrivalled Dead March, which in its might and its extraordinary simplicity is more like a phenomenon of nature than a creation of art. "Envy, eldest-born of Hell," is one of the very finest of all Handel's choruses, the most subtle scientific contrivance being made with consummate skill to subserve the purposes of broad and powerful effect. That *Saul* was appreciated by a select few we may gather from allusions to it in contemporary literature, and rhyming newspaper panegyrics on the composer.

After three performances, and two of *Alexander's Feast*, one of which was for the Decayed Musicians' Fund, it was followed, on April 4, by *Israel in Egypt*. This great work, now so often performed and so much admired, was then received so coldly that the third of the three performances advertised was withdrawn from the bills, and the announcement of the second qualified by the words, "The Oratorio will be shortened, and intermixed with songs." These were Italian, and were sung by Signora Francesina. A third performance did, however, take place, in consequence of a letter by an anonymous correspondent to the *Daily Post*, expressive of great disappointment on the part of several people at the work's being withdrawn so quickly. It was even announced for a fourth day, but was replaced by *Saul*. Its failure must be ascribed to the absence of any personal interest in the story, and the small scope given in the music for the display of the brilliant solo-singers of the time. A work depending for its attraction entirely on the effect of its choruses was too new a kind of thing to be at once understood. It is also very possible that these effects were but faintly realized if the choruses were sung by too small or too weak a body of voices. Like a great Norman building, the work is impressive by its vastness as much as by its detail, and requires for its adequate presentment the co-operation of masses commensurate in strength with its huge outline. It consisted originally of three parts, the third of which was written before the second. Handel seems to have begun by intending to set the "Song of Miriam" only, but, his imagination being aroused by this theme, to have conceived the idea of preceding it by the history of Israel's Bondage and of the Plagues of Egypt, introduced by a Lament of the Israelites for the death of Joseph, which was no other than his *Funeral Anthem* for Queen Caroline. Our Part I. was originally,

therefore, Part II., and the present opening with the recitative formed no part of the composer's intention, which was, to begin with a short instrumental prelude, prefixed expressly by him to the *Funeral Anthem*. The curtailment at the second performance consisted probably in the withdrawal of this first part, as making the work too sombre. Most of the choruses which are coincident with various numbers in the disputed Magnificat belong to the third, or, as we call it, the second part of the work. Some of these movements are so clearly identical with the Magnificat, that if Handel was not its author, his appropriation can hardly be considered less wholesale or less flagrant than Bononcini's in the matter of the madrigal, unless indeed Bononcini's deadly sin consisted in taking words as well as music. In the absence of conclusive proof, the less said the better. The doubtful choruses are all in the unadorned, scientific style of vocal writing, and, original or not, serve as stones in the great structure which they help to support, but of which they are not the salient features. Those are to be found in choruses of which "He sent a thick darkness" is the type. Grand in their harmonic conception, these are also dependent on colour, on the quality and volume of suppressed sound which conveys the strength of terror and despair, the moral counterpart of that thick darkness. Such pieces of dramatic narrative as this must be classed with the great soliloquies of tragedy, such as Handel strove to realize in the "Alma del gran Pompeo" of *Julius Cæsar*. They are *choral recitatives*, uttered by the voice of a multitude instead of a man. And, strangely enough, the path that led to this embodiment of the composer's aspirations was the dusty path of Italian opera, where great combinations were impossible, science all but wasted, and where a giant intellect found little to grasp. Only the expression of emotion was open to a composer who could

sufficiently overcome the trammels of conventionality to realize it. And whenever the situation admitted of a shadow of true emotion, which was seldom enough, Handel did realize it. Now, advancing from the realm of exclusive and individual feeling to a larger sphere, his sympathies enabled him to give that expression to the emotions and passions common to humanity which has found its echo in so many human hearts—in hearts, moreover, belonging to heads as unable to analyze the source of these emotions as they are to distinguish the grain from the unavoidable chaff in this music which they ignorantly worship wholesale. Few intellectual composers have submitted to this rude apprenticeship, and Handel would never have done so had he not nourished hopes and aspirations for opera which never were realized. Still fewer musicians of a more emotional temperament have had the largeness of soul or force of intellect to extend their sympathies beyond the purely personal.

In this year were published the seven trios or two-part sonatas with bass, Op. 5; and the twelve grand concertos for strings, published the next year, were written now. On the 1st of May it seems probable, but not certain, that *Jupiter in Argos*, of which only fragments are known to exist, was performed at the King's Theatre. The music to Dryden's smaller *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* must have immediately followed if not preceded these works. It was performed, together with *Alexander's Feast* and *three* concertos (one for organ) on November 17, and twice repeated, each time with new concertos. The winter was unusually severe, and owing to the frequent indispositions of singers and the constant complaints as to the insufficient warming of the house, no further performance took place till February 21, 1740. On February 27 was produced Handel's music to Milton's poems "L' Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," to

which a third part called "Il Moderato" was added by Charles Jennens. The two poems of Milton's are mixed up in a duologue interspersed with choruses, wherein Cheerfulness and Melancholy alternately set forth their attractions. The work did not succeed at the time, but must have done so afterwards, as it was frequently given by Handel up to the end of his life. It has since become well-known and popular, especially the more genial strains inspired by Cheerfulness, and the song "Sweet bird" of Melancholy, the nightingale's strains in which were afterwards echoed by the chorus in *Solomon*, "May no rash intruder." The "Moderato" of Jennens was as little inspiring to Handel as deserving of its place by the side of the other poems, which, professing to imitate, it merely parodies. These works, with former ones (including a performance of *Israel*, the only one that took place before 1756) filled up the season, which was a dead loss. Yet, in spite of this, Handel gave a performance, on March 28, of *Acis* and Dryden's *Ode*, in behalf of the Musical Fund.

In the autumn he tried his luck once more at Lincoln's Inn Theatre, giving successively *Parnasso in Festa*, *Imeneo*, and *Deidamia*, which all fell completely flat, although *Deidamia* deserved a better fate. He must have resolved, before the end of the season, to quit this unprofitable field, for, in announcing *L' Allegro* and Dryden's *Ode* for the 8th of April, 1741, he apologizes for a slight advance in prices on the ground of its being a farewell performance. That he was personally unpopular is pretty plainly shown by a letter signed "J. B." in the *London Daily Post* of April 4, which, written with the best intentions in his defence, may have been as galling to him as the attack of an enemy. The writer protested against Handel's opponents and persecutors, inviting people to overlook, as spots on the sun, anything that might

have offended them in his demeanour, and which might be due to old age, infirmity, or a pardonable pride, and continues: "I wish I could urge this apology to its full efficacy, and persuade the gentlemen of figure and weight who have taken offence at any part of this great man's conduct (for a great man he must be in the musical world, whatever misfortunes may, now, too late, say to the contrary), I wish I could persuade them, I say, to take him back into favour, and relieve him from the cruel persecution of those little vermin who, taking advantage of their displeasure, pull down even his bills as fast as he has put them up, and use a thousand other little acts to injure and distress him." The writer ends by calling on the public to support the great man at his farewell concert "and show him, on his departure, that London, the greatest and richest city in the world, is great and rich in virtue as well as in money, and can pardon and forget the failings, or even the faults of a great genius."

Meanwhile the subject of this appeal, unmindful whether or not he was to be again taken into favour by the gentlemen of figure and weight, occupied the summer in the composition of the *Messiah* and *Samson*.

After this he started for Ireland, where he arrived on the 18th of November. He had been invited thither by the Duke of Devonshire, lord-lieutenant, who had lately paid several visits to London. He had a friend at Dublin in Matthew Dubourg, an excellent violinist, and scholar of Geminiani, who in 1728 had been appointed master of the king's band in Ireland, but who having been since 1735 in the service of the Prince of Wales, had necessarily been a great deal in England, and now conducted Handel's negotiations with the Irish authorities. Communications passed between Handel and the members and governors of

three charitable institutions, namely, the Charitable Musical Society for the Relief of Imprisoned Debtors, Mercer's Hospital, and the Charitable Infirmary. These had for their object the performance of a work by Handel in behalf of the funds of these societies, and it was, we are assured, with a direct view to this purpose that Handel composed the oratorio of the *Messiah,* which, begun on the 22nd of August, was concluded on the 12th of September. The production of this, the most complete and the most inspired of all his oratorios, seems to have stimulated instead of exhausting his energies, for within eight days after he undertook the composition of *Samson,* for no special object but its own sake.

The Charitable Musical Society of Dublin had recently built a fine new hall in Fishamble Street, the proceeds of which were devoted to their funds. The accounts received by Handel of the opening of this great room may have concurred with other inducements to bring him to Dublin.

The visit proved a happy turning-point in his career. "He came," says Mr. Townsend, in his little book, "Handel's Visit to Dublin," "wearied and disgusted with his contentions and disappointments in London, and at a time when a great change was taking place in his character and sentiments. . . . He found not less a haven of repose than a scene of triumph and unmingled applause."

Handel took with him an excellent organist, Mr. Maclaine, who, except on special occasions, presided for him at the organ; and, as principal singers, Signora Avolio and Mrs. Cibber, sister of Dr. Arne.

On the 23rd of December he gave, as the first of six subscription performances, *L' Allegro, Il Penseroso and Il Moderato,* with two concertos for several instruments and a concerto on the organ, before a crowded and delighted audience. His own feelings on the occasion

are best gathered from a letter written by him to Mr. Jennens (for whom he entertained a great friendship, with a belief in his literary powers it is difficult to comprehend) on the 29th of December :—

Sr—it was with the greatest Pleasure I saw the Continuation of your Kindness by the Lines You was pleased to send me, in order to be prefix'd to your Oratorio Messiah, which I set to Musick before I left England. I am emboldened, Sir, by the generous Concern you please to take in relation to my affairs, to give you an account of the Success I have met here. The Nobility did me the honour to make amongst themselves a Subscription for 6 Nights, which did fill a Room of 600 Persons, so that I needed not sell one single ticket at the Door, and without Vanity the Performance was received with a general Approbation. Sigr Avolio, which I brought with me from London, pleases extraordinary. I have form'd another Tenor Voice which gives great Satisfaction, the Basses and Counter Tenors are very good, and the rest of the Chorus Singers (by my Diriction) do exceeding well, as for the Instruments they are really excellent, Mr. Dubourgh being at the Head of them, and the Musick sounds delightfully in this charming Room, which puts me in such Spirits (and my Health being so good) that I exert myself on my Organ with more then usual Success. . . . I cannot sufficiently express the kind treatment I receive here. but the Politeness of this generous Nation cannot be unknown to you, so I let you judge of the satisfaction I enjoy, passing my time with Hounour, profit, and pleasure.

At the remaining concerts of this first series, Handel produced *Acis and Galatea*, Dryden's *Ode* and *Esther*. The second series began on February 17, 1742, with *Alexander's Feast*, and "several concertos on the organ." The serenata *Hymen* was performed on March 24.

The first announcement of the *Messiah* appeared on Saturday, March 27, and ran as follows :—

For relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the support of Mercer's Hospital on Stephen's Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary in the Inn's Quay, on Monday, the 12th of April will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble St., *Mr. Handel's new grand Oratorio* called the MESSIAH, in which the gentlemen of the choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertos on the Organ, by Mr. Handell, &c. &c.

This is the only occasion when Handel is advertised to play organ concertos, which at other times were left to Maclaine, who probably played the organ part in the oratorio, Handel conducting the performance at the harpsichord.

On the day of production, April 13, the following notice appeared in *Faulkner's Journal*:—

This day will be performed Mr Handell's new Grand Sacred Oratorio, called the MESSIAH. The doors will be open at eleven, and the performance begin at twelve.

The Stewards of the Charitable Musical Society request the Favour of the ladies not to come with hoops this day to the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street. The gentlemen are desired to come without their swords.

This pathetic appeal to the ladies is here made for the third time; it is satisfactory to learn, from a subsequent allusion to this occasion in the same newspaper, that they responded to it.

The impression made by this first performance of the *Messiah* is best described in the words of *Faulkner's Journal*, written when the subject was still fresh:—

On Tuesday last, Mr Handel's Sacred Grand Oratorio, the MESSIAH, was perform'd in the New Musick Hall in Fishamble Street; the best Judges allowed it to be the most finished piece of Musick. Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crowded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestick and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear. It is but Justice to Mr Handel that the World should know he generously gave the Money arising from this Grand Performance, to be equally shared by the Society for relieving Prisoners, the Charitable Infirmary, and Mercer's Hospital, for which they will ever gratefully remember his Name; and that the gentlemen of the two choirs, Mr Dubourg, Mrs Avolio, and Mrs Cibber, who all performed their parts to Admiration, acted also on the same disinterested Principle, satisfied with the deserved Applause of the Publick, and the conscious Pleasure of promoting such useful and extensive Charity. There were above 700 People in the Room, and the Sum collected for that Noble and Pious Charity amounted to about £400, out of which £127 goes to each of the three great and pious Charities.

Mrs. Cibber, who sang "He was despised," was a great favourite with Handel. By her power of expression, although her voice was but a thread, she touched the hearts of her audience where more powerful singers failed. It has been told of her that on this occasion she executed her airs so pathetically that Dr. Delany, the friend and companion of Swift, exclaimed, as he sat in the boxes, "Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven!"

This oratorio has since taken so firm a hold on the English heart, and become so much a part of English life, that to judge of it dispassionately, apart from the halo of association that surrounds it, is difficult. Nor is it easy to understand Sir John Hawkins's opinion that its songs are weaker and colder than those in the other oratorios of its composer. Rather should we say that, with few exceptions, they were more simple, more pathetic, and more nobly expressive than any others.

The words of the *Messiah* are, as every one knows, selected, and very happily selected, from the Bible. A sublime theme is unfolded in language the most simple, the most noble, the most picturesque and poetic, and Handel rose to its requirements. Tenderness, purity, and an almost prophetic elevation, are the attributes of this wonderful oratorio.

A fac-simile of the score, in photo-lithography, was published by the Sacred Harmonic Society, in 1868. This is, therefore, within the reach of all who may be interested in following the composer's mode of working and his occasional changes of purpose while writing the music, which, nevertheless, was accomplished with such extraordinary speed. Handel, from its first production, seems to have regarded it as specially dedicated to the service of his fellow-creatures. And to this day, when any performance has to be given in aid of a charity, the *Messiah* is the work which most fulfils its purpose.

Saul was given in Dublin on May 18. The Overture and Dead March had already been played at a concert, and attracted much attention. The last performance given by Handel in Ireland was of the *Messiah*, on June 3, but he remained after that another two months in the country where his reception had been so hearty and so cheering.

On returning to London he found that his absence had been a judicious move. His friends welcomed him warmly, while the bitter feeling of his enemies had begun to tone down. There was, in some, a sense of shame at having forced him to seek elsewhere the honour rarely met with by a prophet in his own country. Pope had taken up arms in his defence, not that he was himself capable of entering into the musical merits of the case; but he adopted Arbuthnot's opinion of Handel, and knew well enough how to estimate at its just worth the kind of fashionable enmity which he had provoked. In the fourth book of the "Dunciad," published at this time, he represented the "Fluttering form" (of Italian Opera) as appealing to the mighty goddess Dullness, and invoking her assistance in crushing so formidable a rival as Handel, concluding,—

> But soon, ah, soon! rebellion will commence,
> If music meanly borrows aid from sense;
> Strong in new arms, lo! giant Handel stands,
> Like bold Briareus, with a hundred hands;
> To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul, he comes,
> And Jove's own thunders follow Mars's drums.
> Arrest him, Empress, or you sleep no more!
> She heard, and drove him to th' Hibernian shore.

A private letter from London, printed in *Faulkner's Journal* of March 12, 1743, gives a contemporary's view of the state of things :—

> Our friend Mr. Handel is very well, and Things have taken a quite different Turn here from what they did some time past; for the Publick will be no longer imposed on by Italian Singers,

and wrong-headed Undertakers of bad Operas, but find out the Merit of Mr. Handell's Compositions and English Performances. The new Oratorio (called SAMSON) which he composed since he left Ireland, has been performed four Times to more crowded Audiences than ever were seen; more people being turned away for want of Room, each night, than hath been at the Italian Opera.

That *Samson* has not become, like the *Messiah*, the object of a national veneration, is due to the difference of subject and the inferiority of the words, although among the oratorios not scriptural in text they rank high. They were arranged and "adapted to the stage," from the "Samson Agonistes" of Milton, by Newburgh Hamilton, who attempted to carry out his task with as little innovation in arrangement and expression as possible, even borrowing words for the additional lines from minor poems of Milton's. Abridged as it was, it remained far too long, and had to be considerably cut down by Handel in performance. At a later date he made a number of alterations and improvements on the first version, presented for the first time in print by Dr. Chrysander, in the edition of the German Handel Society. The Dead March written for this oratorio was afterwards replaced by that in *Saul*, which is more gloomy in its grandeur, but not more beautiful than this.

To enter adequately into the beauties of *Samson* would require a small volume. The choruses—single and double—"O first created beam," "Then round about the starry throne," "Hear, Jacob's God," "Fix'd in his everlasting seat," "Weep, Israel, weep," and "Let their celestial concerts all unite," are so many imperishable monuments of their composer's fame. What scene, in what opera, is in the highest sense so dramatic as the alternation of the pathetic prayer "Return, O God of Hosts" with the tragic chorus "To dust his glory they would tread"? This must be the highest realization yet effected in music of that

chorus of Greek tragedy which has inspired so much emulation among modern writers.

Among the solos stand out "Let the bright seraphim," with trumpet obbligato, pre-eminent in brilliancy, and "Total eclipse," unrivalled in declamatory pathos, among all similar compositions of their author.

Samson was performed eight times, after which, on March 23, the *Messiah* was produced for the first time in London, under the name of "a Sacred Oratorio," probably to give no excuse for offence to any ill-disposed people, who might have discovered a blasphemy in an advertisement containing the name of the Messiah. It was performed three times in one week, and received, according to Burney, with universal admiration and applause. This must have been the tribute of genuine lovers of music, not the craze of an empty but noisy fashion, for the newspapers of the year make no allusion to either the *Messiah* or *Samson*, although these remained the most popular, as they were the greatest works of their composer, who declared that he himself did not know to which of them he yielded the preference.

We have it on the authority of Dr. Beattie, author of the "Minstrel," that the custom, which still prevails, of standing during the Hallelujah Chorus in the *Messiah* dates from its first performance in London, when its effect was so overwhelming that, at the phrase "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," the whole audience, with the king, who was present, started to their feet as if by one simultaneous impulse, and remained standing till the end.

One person professed but a limited satisfaction with the work. This was Mr. Jennens, who had compiled the words, and to whom Handel wrote in 1744, asking him to point out those passages in the music which he thought required altering. Fortunately, he did not carry complaisance so far as to make indiscriminate

changes. A letter (to a third person) from Mr. Jennens, in 1745, gives a glimpse into these transactions: "I shall show you a collection I gave Handel, call'd Messiah, which I value highly, and he has made a fine Entertainment of it, though not near as good as he might and ought to have done. I have with great difficulty made him correct some of the grossest faults in the composition, but he retained his Overture obstinately, in which there are some passages far unworthy of Handel, but much more unworthy of the *Messiah.*" Poor Mr. Jennens could not realize the grotesque effect of his words, when read a century after they were written.

From this time, Handel's superiority in his profession was uncontested for the rest of his life, although vicissitudes of fortune were yet in store for him, and he still had to suffer from the rancorous opposition of a certain fashionable set who hated him, and who renewed the practice of giving assemblies and card-parties on his oratorio nights, in order, as far as possible, to thin his audience. But in spite of all, Burney says of him, as Cassius of Cæsar, that at this time "he did bestride the [musical] world like a Colossus." He conducted concerts for the Prince of Wales at Carlton House, where he behaved in as autocratic manner as in his own orchestra. The tone of voice in which, at the close of an air, he was wont to cry out the word "*Chorus!*" is said to have been quite formidable. If the ladies of the court indulged in conversation during the music, he was capable of swearing and calling names, "whereupon the gentle princess, who loved him much, would say to the offenders, "Hush, hush, Handel is angry."

In 1743, he wrote the *Te Deum* and *Anthem*, in commemoration of the victory of Dettingen, the best-known of his compositions of this kind. In this brilliant and effective work, he seems once more to

have proceeded on his principle of natural selection, much of the material for it being furnished by a Te Deum, written about 1697, by Francesco Uria. Set off by powerful orchestration, distinguished by much employment of brass instruments and drums, the *Dettingen Te Deum* was greatly admired on its production, and was considered to advance its author's reputation.

Semele, severally called an "opera," an "oratorio," and a "dramatic performance," and *Joseph and his Brethren*, an oratorio, were both given in the spring of 1744.

The next work was *Belshazzar;* the book by Jennens, to whom Handel wrote of it in warm terms: "It has furnish'd me with expressions, and given me opportunity to some very particular ideas, besides so many great choruses."

Belshazzar was performed, as also *Hercules*, a "musical drama" which remains almost unknown, in the winter of 1744-5. Twenty-four oratorio-concerts were announced, but they were so thinly attended that the promises could not be carried out, and they stopped short at the sixteenth performance. Handel's resources were inadequate to meet these repeated failures. His oratorios were performed on a large and expensive scale, and although he lived prudently and economically, he always paid his musicians liberally, never saving himself at their expense.

For the second time in his life he now became bankrupt. Till 1746, he lived in retirement, nor is there any record of anything written by him, save one chamber-duet. Early in 1746, he came again before the public with the *Occasional Oratorio*, written, it is surmised, to make good to his subscribers of 1744 the eight concerts still owing to them. They each received two tickets, besides the silver subscription-ticket, for each of the three performances, which were all he could give.

The *Occasional Oratorio* contains some half-dozen numbers borrowed from *Israel* and the *Coronation Anthem*, and the work has, in consequence, been spoken of as a pasticcio. This it is not, much of it being new, and some of it, including the well-known and popular overture, very fine. The air, "Come, ever smiling Liberty," better known in *Judas Maccabæus*, belonged originally to the *Occasional Oratorio*, and Arne's "Rule, Britannia," which Mr. Schœlcher is pleased to call the "Marseillaise of England," is, to a very great extent, identical with "War shall cease."

Handel gave, after this, no more oratorios by subscription, but trusted to the support of the general public. And as from this time his fortune improved so steadily that he died possessed of 20,000*l.* he must have found the plan a successful one. One of the most remunerative and popular of his works, too, was composed now. This was *Judas Maccabæus*, written by order of the Prince of Wales to celebrate the return of the Duke of Cumberland (to whom, in cringing terms, the words are dedicated by their author, Morrell) after the battle of Culloden. *Judas Maccabæus* is still well-known, popular, and remunerative, but cannot be classed with works of such mental elevation as *Saul* or *Solomon*, not to mention *Samson* or *Messiah*.

Alexander Balus and *Joshua*, both composed in 1747, were performed at Covent Garden in 1748. *Joshua*, with much that is new and some that is great, contains many reminiscences of its author's early Italian works, to which, now, he seems often to have recurred. Two of these, previously mentioned, are the chorus "Glory to God," and the song "Oh, had I Jubal's lyre." The well-known trio and chorus "See the conqu'ring hero comes," afterwards transferred, words and all, to *Judas Maccabeus*, belonged originally to *Joshua*.

1748 was a good year, for Handel wrote *Solomon* in the spring, and *Susanna* in the summer, both of which

contain, in their respective styles, some of his most beautiful music. Neither occupied more than six weeks in composition. The chief characteristic of *Susanna* is its exceeding melodiousness and the beauty of the instrumental accompaniments. There are, also, some powerful recitatives. *Solomon* is pre-eminent by its choruses. The double choruses at the beginning of each act are conspicuous for stately splendour, the four-part chorus "Let no rash intruder," for idyllic grace and tunefulness; but the chain of choruses delineating the passions, and which stands for the concert given by King Solomon to the fortunate Queen of Sheba, is an unrivalled series of tone-pictures. The words, taken as a whole, are intensely silly and absurd, but wherever there lurked a spark that could fire Handel's imagination, it blazed forth at once. His fame has suffered from his very ability to write music when no such spark existed.

Solomon was only performed four times, twice in 1749, and twice, ten years after, in 1759.

In April, 1749, he wrote the *Fireworks Music*, for the public celebration of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. It was rehearsed at Vauxhall on the 22nd, and performed in the Green Park on the 27th by a very powerful band, including an unusual number of brass instruments, with kettle-drums, and side-drums. It was also performed at the Foundling Hospital for the benefit of that institution, together with several pieces composed or arranged for the occasion, and forming an anthem, recently published in Chrysander's edition.

On the 16th of March, 1749, Handel produced *Theodora*. For this work, which with audiences had no success, he seems to have cherished a predilection. It contains the popular airs, "Lord, to thee each night and day," and "Angels ever bright and fair."

At this time, there is reason to suppose that Handel visited Holland and Germany for a short time, during

which he sustained some severe injury from an accident to his carriage. This appears in a paragraph in the *General Advertiser* (quoted by Mr. Schœlcher) announcing his recovery and his return.

It is not easy to reconcile this journey with the dates of commencement (June 28) and completion (July 5) of the *Choice of Hercules*, unless, indeed, as Mr. Schœlcher suggests, Handel wrote this while travelling.

In 1750 he conducted a performance of the *Messiah* at the Foundling Hospital. He had endowed the chapel of this institution with a fine organ; he now presented the hospital with a score of the *Messiah*, and promised to conduct its performance every year for the benefit of the charity. Eleven performances under Handel's direction took place before his death in 1759, bringing 6955*l.* to the hospital. After his death annual performances were given, conducted at first by J. C. Smith, Handel's pupil and friend; afterwards by Stanley, the famous blind organist. Seventeen of these performances augmented the previous sum to 10,299*l.* "And from that time to the present," says Burney, "this great work has been heard in all parts of the kingdom with increasing reverence and delight; it has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan, and enriched succeeding managers of oratorios more than any single musical production in this or any country." The directors of the Foundling imagined, and probably wished the benefit conferred on them to be exclusive, and were proceeding to ask for an Act of Parliament, securing to themselves the sole right of performing the *Messiah*, when Handel, to whom such a thing had not occurred, burst into rage, exclaiming, "Te teufel! for what sall de foundlings put mein moosic in de Parliament? Te teufel! mein moosic sall not go to de Parliament."

Jephtha, Handel's last real oratorio, was produced on

February 26, 1752. It contains beautiful and melodious numbers, and most especially the fine recitative "Deeper and deeper still," and lovely song "Waft her, angels," dear to all tenor singers. Its composition was interrupted by the attacks of "gutta serena" from which, although he three times submitted to the operation of couching, Handel finally lost his sight, becoming totally blind. Under this cruel affliction his spirits are said to have sunk for a time, but when he found the evil incurable he submitted with resignation. Unable without assistance to conduct the oratorios, he applied to Smith, who was travelling abroad, but who, giving up all his projects, returned home at once, so that, by his assistance the concerts were continued. At a performance of *Samson* soon after, when the song—

> Total eclipse! No sun, no moon,
> All dark amid the blaze of noon,

was sung with great feeling by the English tenor Beard, the recollection that these words had been set to that music by the blind composer then seated by the organ, affected the audience so forcibly that many persons present were moved even to tears. After this year, however, he resumed his place at the organ, and, blind as he was, introduced concertos, as usual, between the acts of his oratorios. At first he relied on his memory, but the exertion becoming painful, he had recourse to the inexhaustible stores of his rich and fertile imagination. One more oratorio he now produced, necessarily dictated to his amanuensis; the *Triumph of Time and Truth*, based on the work of 1708 and 1737, but altered, and so much added to and extended as to make it, in fact, new. Several numbers are, however, borrowed from other oratorios, but the recitative was entirely recomposed.

This was his last work.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

HANDEL had not been blind many years when his great strength began to fail. In 1756 and 1757 he added codicils to his will. He felt himself to be dying, and refused to be flattered by any hopes of a recovery, yet even this did not prevent the last year of his life from being very busy. Eight oratorio representations took place in March, 1759. On the 6th of April he directed a performance of the *Messiah*, his last effort. On returning home he took to his bed, which he never left again, but, sinking rapidly, died before midnight on Good Friday, April 13, the anniversary of the first production of the *Messiah*.

His death seems, at the time, to have passed almost unnoticed by the newspapers. A performance of the *Messiah*, to be conducted by himself, was announced at the Foundling for May 3. The advertisement was repeated on the very day of his decease, "and, side by side with it, the simple line, 'yesterday morning died G. F. Handel, Esq.'" (Schœlcher). The event was anticipated by a day in this announcement. But the news rapidly spread, and his funeral, a week afterwards, in Westminster Abbey, was attended by at least 3000 people.

Above his grave, in Poet's Corner, a monument, by Roubillac, was erected to his memory, representing him in the act of writing "I know that my Redeemer liveth," which is being dictated to him by an angel.

For the last ten years of his life he had been allowed to live in comparative peace, and his works brought him profit as well as fame, so that he not only discharged all his liabilities, but left 20,000*l.*, which, subject to a legacy of 1000*l.* to the Society for the Support of Decayed Musicians and their Families, and numerous smaller bequests to private individuals, was inherited by his niece, Johanna Frederica Floerchen, *née* Michaelsen.

All his manuscripts became the property of his faithful friend and amanuensis, J. C. Smith. He had promised this bequest to Smith, but afterwards conceiving the wish to have all his manuscripts preserved in the university library at Oxford, he offered his friend a legacy of 3000*l.*, if he would resign his claim to them. Smith absolutely refused to do so, and Handel made his promise good. At a later date the entire collection was presented by Smith, as a tribute of gratitude, to George III., and is now preserved at Buckingham Palace. It includes the original manuscripts of almost all his works, and the beautiful copies of the oratorios taken by Smith.

Another collection of Handelian manuscripts belonged to Lord Fitzwilliam, and is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. Of these MSS. there are seven volumes, consisting chiefly of sketches and fragments.

Numberless portraits of Handel exist, but, as the subject would occupy too large a space for the present work, the reader is referred for an account of the most important among them to the article HANDEL in the "Dictionary of Music and Musicians," edited by Sir George Grove.

Dr. Burney, who knew Handel well, has thus described his appearance :—

"The figure of Handel was large, and he was somewhat corpulent and unwieldy in his motions, but his

countenance, which I remember as perfectly as that of any man I saw but yesterday, was full of fire and dignity, and such as impressed ideas of superiority and genius. He was impetuous, rough, and peremptory, in his manners and conversation, but totally devoid of ill-nature or malevolence; indeed, there was an original humour and pleasantry in his most lively sallies of anger or impatience, which, with his broken English, were extremely risible. His natural propensity to wit and humour, and happy manner of relating common occurrences in an uncommon way, enabled him to throw persons and things into very ridiculous attitudes. Had he been as great a master of the English language as Swift, his *bon-mots* would have been as frequent, and somewhat of the same kind."

During the latter years of his life, the rehearsals for his oratorios took place either at Carlton House or at his own residence in Brook Street. Burney used to play in his band, gratifying in this way his "eager curiosity in seeing and examining the person and manners of so extraordinary a man, as well as in hearing him perform on the organ. He was a blunt and peremptory disciplinarian on these occasions, but had a humour and wit in delivering his instructions, and even in chiding and finding fault, that was peculiar to himself, and extremely diverting to all but those on whom his lash was laid." "Handel wore an enormous white wig, and when things went well at the oratorio, it had a certain nod, or vibration, which manifested his pleasure and satisfaction. Without it, nice observers were sure that he was out of humour. . . . . His general look was somewhat heavy and sour, but when he *did* smile, it was his sire, the sun, bursting out of a black cloud."

He was so prominent a figure in a society addicted above all things to talk, that a quantity of anecdotes are, of course, current about him, some more, some less

deserving of belief. In a good many of them the whole point seems to lie in the broken English, and the reader does not lose much by the fact that limited space prevents their being quoted. Still, by taking them all together, it is not difficult to extract from the mixture of what was true and what was credible enough to be invented a tolerably complete picture of the grand, rough, storm-beaten old musician, compared at different times to Orpheus and to a great bear, celebrated as the "Caro Sassone" and the "Charming Brute." This last title was conferred upon him in a caricature by Goupy, representing him seated at the organ, with a boar's head and enormous tusks (alluding to his passionate temper), in a room strewn with horns, trumpets and drums; a donkey's head, braying, is seen through the open window, as well as a park of artillery, supposed to be fired by the music of the organist, who sits on a beer-barrel, surrounded by fowls, a ham, a turbot, and a heap of oyster-shells—a thrust at Handel's greatest weakness, which was "an over-indulgence in the pleasures of the table." It was, by universal consent, his only vice, but it was undoubted. "Nature, indeed," says Burney, "required a great support of sustenance to support so huge a mass, and he was rather epicurean in the choice of it." Underneath the caricature alluded to are the lines,—

> Strange monsters have adorn'd the stage,
> Not Afric's coast produces more:
> And yet no land nor clime nor age
> Have equall'd this harmonious boar.

"Handel," says the author of the "Anecdotes," "contracted few intimacies, and when his early friends died he was not solicitous of acquiring new ones." That he never married is ascribed by Hawkins to the weakness or the want of social affections. This imputation is indignantly denied by the writer just quoted, who tells us of two ladies, his pupils, who, at different times,

fell in love with him, and (we are left to infer) by both of whom he was much attracted. In each case the lady was of higher social position than himself, and the obstacle to marriage was his profession, which he would neither renounce nor suffer to be slighted. Neither names nor dates are appended to this story, which is, however, repeated as probably true, by all biographers.

He was a good son and a good brother, a faithful, if somewhat irascible friend; totally devoid of avarice or meanness; distinguished, indeed, by an unfailing charity and liberality. During the last fifteen years of his life he seldom left his house except to go to the theatre, or, occasionally, to some picture-sale. Smith and Hawkins assure us that his religious feeling was deep and sincere. During his last years he was a regular attendant at the church of St. George's, Hanover Square, where he behaved with singular devoutness. He is said to have frequently declared in conversation the gratification he enjoyed in setting the Scriptures to music, and it is certain that the words of the Gospels or the utterances of the Hebrew prophets seem to have suggested to him his noblest ideas.

Although England was his chosen home, and for the last thirty-one years of his life he was a naturalized British subject, it is as gratuitous to claim him as an *Englishman* as it would be to deny that much in the tone of his mind and genius was singularly attuned to the English character. Grandeur and simplicity, the majestic scale on which his great works are conceived, the clear definiteness of his ideas and the directness of the means employed in carrying them out, a pathetic feeling equally removed from the sensuous and the abstract, these are the distinguishing qualities of Handel's music.

His industry was vast and incessant. We have seen with what rapidity he composed. But the speed

at which he worked argues no want of care in the workmanship, nor was he always content to leave his ideas in the form in which they first occurred to him. The shortness of time occupied in the completion of his great masterpieces was due not merely to the ever-readiness of his inspiration, but also to the laboriousness and wonderful power of concentration which enabled him to get through more work in a given time than is accomplished by ordinary men. Nor does the fact that he made other men's ideas serve his purpose not infrequently, affect this general statement. The original sketches of his works which are extant, while bearing in their penmanship the traces of impetuous speed, yet abound in erasures, corrections, and after-thoughts, showing that he brought sound judgment and stern criticism to bear on his own creations.

Several of his works have been reinstrumented by subsequent composers to suit the modern orchestra, and to supply what, at their first production, was supplied by Handel himself on the organ. Where, as sometimes happens, no organ is available, this is necessary, as the original organ and harpsichord parts consist only of a figured bass, from which the performer filled in the harmonies indicated. The pianoforte, too, to which the accompaniment of many oratorio-songs was allotted by Handel, is banished from the modern orchestra. It is doubtless an evil in principle to permit any addition soever to be made to the works of a great composer: how far it is an evil in practice depends in this case on the discretion with which the task is carried out. Mozart wrote additional accompaniments to the *Messiah*, to *Alexander's Feast*, *Acis and Galatea*, and the *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*. Franz has done the same for *L' Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso*; Mendelssohn to the *Dettingen Te Deum*. Mendelssohn also wrote an organ part to *Israel in Egypt*, good in itself,

though in many respects not consonant with the composer's intentions.

It is as a choral writer that Handel is supreme. No one, before or since, has understood so well how to extract from a body of voices such grand results by such artfully-simple means as he has done. Essentially practical in his nature, he derived his ideas from facts, not his facts from ideas, and these choruses tell their story in true Homeric fashion.

What is imitable in him is the result of certain forms of expression that he used because he found them ready to his hand. That which is his own is inimitable. His oratorios are, in their own style, as unapproached now as ever; he seems to have exhausted what art can do in this direction, yet he has not swayed the minds of modern composers as Bach has done. Bach, while Handel was pursuing his chequered career, lived and wrote in comparative retirement. His influence began to be felt only many years after his death, when the treasures he had left behind him were first brought to light. He was a thinker who traced ideas to their source, and pursued abstract truth to its uttermost limits; his music reaches the deepest emotions through the medium of the intellect.

Handel's works appeal to the widest human sympathies. What he saw and what he felt he painted, but did not analyze. The difference between him and Bach is that between a great epic poet and a great philosopher. Who shall say whether is greater? For traces of the influence of the one we must seek deeper and look farther. But the power of the other is more consciously felt and more universally recognized.

THE END.

A LIST OF HANDEL'S OPERAS, ORATORIOS, ETC.

THE following is a list of Handel's works :[1]—

2 Italian Oratorios ; "Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno" (1707-8), and "La Resurrezione" (1708).

1 German "Passion" (1717-18).

19 English Oratorios ; "Esther" (1720), "Deborah" (1733), "Athaliah" (1733), "Saul" (1738), "Israel" (1738), "Messiah" (1741), "Samson" (1741), "Joseph" (1743), "Hercules" (1744), "Belshazzar" (1744), "Occasional" (1746), "Judas Maccabæus" (1746), "Alexander Balus" (1747), "Joshua" (1747), "Solomon" (1748), "Susanna" (1748), "Theodora" (1749), "Jephtha" (1751), "Triumph of Time and Truth" (1757).

5 Te Deums ; "Utrecht" (1713), 2 "Chandos" (1718-20), Queen Caroline's (? 1737), "Dettingen" (1743).

6 Psalms ; "Dixit Dominus" et "Gloria" (1707), "Laudate" et "Gloria" (1707), "Laudate" et "Gloria" (1707-9), "Nisi Dominus" (1707-9), Utrecht "Jubilate" (1713), Arrangement of Utrecht "Jubilate" (? 1727).

20 Anthems ; 12 "Chandos" (10) (1718-20), 4 "Coronation" (1727), 1 "Wedding" (performed 1736), 1 "Funeral" (1737), 1 "Dettingen" (1743), 1 "Foundling Hospital" (1749).

Arrangements of 4 of the "Chandos" Anthems for the Chapel Royal (? 1727).

Some Recits. in a Wedding Anthem (pasticcio) for the Marriage of the Princess Anne, taken from Athalia, and from the seventh Chandos Anthem (1734).

1 Motet ; "Silete, venti" (1707-9).

Miscellaneous sacred ; a "Gloria" (1707-9), "Kyrie" (1707-9), "Magnificat" (? 1707-9) ; 3 Hymns, "The Invitation," "Desiring to love," and on "The Resurrection" (1742).

3 German Operas ; "Almira" (1704), "Nero" (performed 1705), "Florindo and Daphne" (1708).

[1] Where the date of composition is not even approximately known, that of publication has been given.

39 Italian Operas: "Roderigo" (1706), "Agrippina" (1707), "Silla" (1707-8), "Rinaldo" (1711), "Pastor Fido" (1712), "Teseo" (1712), "Amadigi" ("Oriana" at Hamburg) (? 1715), "Radamisto" ("Zenobia" at Hamburg) (? 1720), "Muzio Scevola" (1721), "Floridante" (? 1721), "Ottone" (1722), "Flavio" (1723), "Giulio Cesare" (1723), "Tamerlano" (1724), "Rodelinda" (1725), "Scipione" (1726), "Alessandro" (or "Roxana") (1726), "Admeto" (? 1727), "Ricardo 1°" (1727), "Siroe" (1728), "Tolomeo" (1728), "Lotario" ("Judith" at Hamburg) (1729), "Partenope" (1730), "Poro" ("Cleofida" at Hamburg) (1731), "Ezio" (? 1731) "Sosarme" (1732), "Orlando" (1732), "Arianna" (1733), "Ariodante" (1734) "Alcina" (1735), "Atalanta" (1736), "Giustino" (1736), "Arminio" (1736), "Berenice" (1737), "Faramondo" (1737), "Serse" (1738), Airs in "Jupiter in Argos" (pasticcio) (1739), "Imeneo" (1738-40), "Deidamia" (1740).

Fragments of "Flavio Olibrio" an opera which Handel abandoned after the beginning. "Lucio Vero" was a mere pasticcio (1747) containing not one note of new music.

Fragments of "Titus" (? 1731); Recits. to "Semiramide," "Arbace," and "Caio Fabrizio" (pasticci, 1733-4); 5 pieces and an Overture to "Orestes" (pasticcio, 1734); Overture to "Alessandro Severo" (pasticcio, 1738); and fragments of an Opera without name or date.

1 English Opera, "Alcestes" (1749), called "Alcides" by Dr. Arnold, partly used in "The Choice of Hercules."

2 Italian Serenatas; "Aci, Galatea, e Polifemo" (1708), 13 Air and Choruses for "Parnasso in Festa" (performed 1734).

2 English Serenatas; "Acis and Galatea" (1721), "Semele" (1743).

1 English Interlude, "The Choice of Hercules," (1750).

1 Italian Intermezzo, "Terpsichore" (performed 1734).

4 Odes; Queen Anne's "Birthday Ode" (1712), "Alexander's Feast" (1736), "Dryden's Ode" or "St. Cecilia's Day" "L'Allegro, il Penseroso, ed il Moderato" (1740).

2 Chamber Trios; "Se tu non lasci amore," "Quel fior che all' alba ride" (1708).

24 Chamber Duets; 13 called "Hanover Duets" (1711); 2, "Quel fior," "No, di voi" (1741); 3, "Beato in ver," "No, di voi," "Fronda leggiera" (1742); 1, "Qual saria" (1745); 5, "Giù nei Tartarei," "Cara autor" (1), "Caro autor," (2), "Ah, nella sorte," "Spero indarno" (n. d.).

1 Italian Duet, "L'amore innocente," unpublished and lost (performed March 28, 1738).

94 Cantatas; 1, "Passion," German (1704); 12 called "Hanover" (1711); 79 written in Italy, unpublished (1706-12); 2, "Cecilia, volgi," "Sei del cielo" (1736).
7 French Songs (1707-9).
19 English Songs (v. d.) found separate or in various Songbooks (1715-56).
1 English Air, unpublished, "For ever let his sacred raptures," (n. d.).
16 Italian Airs and Canzonets, unpublished (n. d.).

Instrumental.

6 Sonatas (Trios), recently discovered (in Buckingham Palace) (1694).
12 Sonatas (Solos). Op. 1 (published 1732).
6 Sonatas (Trios). Op. 2 (published 1732).
6 Concertos (Hautboy). Op. 3 (published 1734).
1st Set. 6 Organ Concertos (7 parts). Op. 4 (published 1734).
7 Sonatas (Trios). Op. 5 (published 1735).
12 Grand Concertos. Op. 6 (1739; published 1739.)
2nd Set. 6 Organ Concertos. (2 with 7 instrumental parts) (published 1741). The Instrumental parts to these (published 1760).
3rd Set. 6 Organ Concertos (7 Instrumental parts). Op. 7 (1740-51; published 1761).
3 Organ Concertos (7 Instrumental parts) (published 1797) (Arnold).
Concertante in 9 parts (1736), "Water Musick" in 7 parts (1715).
Tunes in the "Alchymist" (1732), "Forest Music" (1741-2), "Fireworks Music" (1749), Hornpipe (1740), Sonata for 2 Violins (1736). Sonatas in 5 parts (1736); Sonata for Violin, Sonata for Hautboy, Violin, and Viola, and an Overture (n. d.).

Music for Harpsichord.

4 Pieces, in Holland (? 1710).
1st Set. Suites de Pièces (published 1720).
4 Minuets and a March (published 1720).
2nd Set. Suites de Pièces (published 1733).
6 Pieces (published 1798). 4 Pieces (published 1859 by the German Handel Society), Six Fugues for Organ and Harpsichord (1720; published 1735).

By far the most important collection of Handel's original MSS. is that which is preserved in the Musical Library at Buckingham Palace. It is in 87 volumes, uniformly half-bound, with red leather backs, the titles of the work being affixed on green labels, followed by the words, "by Handel." At the foot of each, also on a green label, the words "Original Score" are printed. The dates appear below again, on the red leather. This binding is common to the rest of the collection of music formed at that time. Handel's MSS. were, therefore, bound in this manner after they had been presented to George III. by C. Smith, to whom they had been bequeathed by the composer.

The operas are in 32 vols., as follows:—

Agrippina.
Alcina.
Alessandro.
Arianna.
Ariodanti.
Arminio.
Atalanta.
Berenice.
Deidamia.
Ezio.
Faramondo.
Flavio.
Floridante.
Giustino.
Imeneo.
Giulio Cesare.
Lotario.
Muzio Scevola.
Orlando.
Ottone.
Partenope.
Poro.
Radamisto.
Riccardo 1°.
Rodelinda.
Roderigo.
Scipio.
Serse.
Siroe.
Sosarme.
Tamerlano.
Tolomeo.

Oratorios, &c., in 21 vols.:—

Alexander Balus.
Athaliah.
Belshazzar.
Deborah.
Esther.
Hercules.
Israel in Egypt.
Jephtha.
Joseph.
Joshua.
Judas Maccabæus
Messiah.
Occasional Oratorio.
Resurrezione.
Samson.
Saul
Semele.
Sketch of the Messiah.[2]
Solomon.
Susanna.
Theodora.

[2] This title is erroneous. It is the beginning of the Messiah, arranged for clavecin.

Odes and Serenatas in 7 vols :—

Aci e Galatea (Italian).
Acis and Galatea (English).
Alexander's Feast.
Choice of Hercules.
L' Allegro, &c.
Ode for St. Cecilia's Day.
Ode for Queen Anne's Birthday.

Various sacred compositions in 12 vols. :—

1. Anthem ("As pants the hart").
2. } Anthems. 3 vols.[3]
3. }
4. }
5. Coronation Anthem.
6. Funeral Anthem.
7. Gloria, &c. (a vol. containing a "Gloria," "Kyrie," a Motet for 6 voices, and "As pants the hart," set for 4 voices and chorus.
8. Laudate, and Dixit.
9. Motet, and Duetti (containing "Silete, venti," &c.).
10. Te Deum and Jubilate, 1712 and 1713.
11. Te Deum, &c., (containing the Chandos Te Deum in A, Queen Caroline's Te Deum, and "Let God arise," one of the Chandos Anthems).
12. Te Deum, 1743.

Cantatas and sketches in 11 vols. :—

1. Cantatas, containing "Arresta il passo," "Eccomi giunto," and "Del ciel, Maria."
2. A cantata and Anthem ("Mi palpita il cor" and "I will magnify").
3. } Cantatas, 2 vols.
4. }
5. } Cantatas with accompaniment, 2 vols.
6. }
7. Sketches, containing another "Laudate," "Magnificat," &c.
8. } Songs and sketches.
9. }
10. }

[3] These 3 vols. (not numbered) contain 9 of the 12 Chandos Anthems, among which have been inserted one of the Chandos Te Deums and an arrangement of the Utrecht Jubilate.

11. A vol. (sewed) containing a new version of "Mi palpita" (cantata) with accompaniment for hautbois, an air from Belshazzar, and 3 Operatic Arias.

Instrumental compositions, in 5 vols. :—

1. Fireworks Music.
2. Grand Concertos.
3. Organ Concertos.
4. Sketches of Fugues, containing the "Six Fugues," some of the Sonatas, and some fragments of the "Suites de Pièces."
5. Sonatas, &c.

Besides these, the Royal Musical Library contains a set of copies by Smith (the elder) in 17 vols., forming a collection evidently designed as a continuation to the original MSS. :—

1. Admetus.
2. Amadis.
3. Anthems, &c., containing "Praise the Lord with one consent," "Look down," recit.; "Sweet accents," Aria; several chamber-duets; and La Lucretia (cantata).
4. Anthem for the Foundling Hospital.
5. Il Trionfo del Tempo.
6. Motet, "Nisi Dominus edificaverit."
7. Mucius Scævola, containing (at end) 18 airs from other operas.
8. Ode on Queen Anne's Birthday.
9. Passion, German Oratorio.
10. Resurrezione.
11. Rinaldo.
12. Silla.
13. Songs, containing the airs and choruses added to Acis when given in 1732, and other things.
14. } Additional songs.
15. }
16. Te Deum (Queen Caroline's).
17. Teseo.

Of the above, Rinaldo has several corrections by Handel's own hand; and at the end of the Trionfo del Tempo, the composer himself has written all the airs which he added when he gave that Oratorio with English words. He has also written the word "Cantata" at the head of La Lucretia.

There is also another collection here of copies, mostly by the

hand of the elder Smith, in 24 vols., large folio, and four or five odd volumes.

Other original MSS. of Handel are preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, in 7 vols. (1 fol., 1 4to, and 5 oblong fol.). These consist of sketches, rough drafts, single airs, fragments of scenas, musical memoranda, dance music, &c., of the greatest value and interest. One vol. only contains an entire work, "O praise the Lord with one consent" (Chandos Anthem). The Fitzwilliam Museum possesses also MS. copies in score of Teseo; Pastor Fido; Ariodanti; Agrippina; Amadigi; Ode on Queen Anne's birthday; Chandos Te Deum, in B♭; a vol. containing 4 grand choruses from Parnasso in Festa; "Si parli ancor," "O quanto bella," "Fanni ancora," and "Lunga seria;" and lastly, a parcel of various pieces, cantatas, duets, &c.

Three vols. of original MSS. are found in the British Museum. They are as follows:—

A vol. containing the autograph full score of the anthems "The King shall rejoice" (Dettingen, 1743), and "As pants the hart."

Another, containing the autograph full scores of a Cantata ("Lungi dal mio bel nume"), Rome, 3 March, 1708; song and choruses in "Alcestis;" and "La Didone," Opera by L. Vinci, with alterations and corrections by the hand of Handel.

A third vol., containing the full score (autograph) of the second, third, and fourth Organ Concertos.

One or two more occur in private collections.

There is a fine collection of copies by J. C. Smith, jun., in 67 vols. in the possession of Mr. H. Barrett Lennard, who purchased it at the sale of the library of the late Mr. Brownsmith, and has since then added a few more vols. to it.

Lastly, but not least important, comes the collection (in 160 vols.) of Smith's MSS., 60 or 70 of which were the conducting scores used by Handel, bequeathed by him to C. Smith, his secretary and pupil, completely "covered with notes, directions, and corrections" by the composer, and containing many otherwise inedited variations and airs. This invaluable collection, bought by M. Schœlcher, from Kerslake of Bristol, was by him sold to the municipality of Halle, by whom it is now preserved.